Blood on the Roadside

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Blood on the Roadside

by stranded_labyrinth

Summary

“You really need to go. It’s not safe for you here.”

"Not safe for me, or not safe because of you?" Hannibal asked, gazing at this man with keen interest.

The man nearly winced. "Both."

Hannibal went to respond, but found himself hissing again as a dog pushed its snout against his ankle, whining at its owner afterward.

The man’s brow furrowed. “You break something?”

“My ankle,” Hannibal answered simply. “I’m afraid that leaves me quite unable to run.”

____

After a chase between Hannibal Lecter and Tobias Budge results in a car crash that leaves both men injured, Hannibal must use the only building he finds as shelter from the storm that sent them off the road to begin with. When he discovers that the home he has entered belongs to a vampire who would much prefer to be alone, Hannibal finds it rather difficult not to quickly become obsessed.

Notes

my initial idea was very simply Vampire!Will who does not really appreciate having to consume people and a Hannibal who is very smitten by it (considering all the cannibalism) and offers himself up. this is essentially that but more detailed i guess

this actually got beta read so i hope you enjoy

Blood on the Roadside

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The pads of his fingers scraped against the asphalt as he clamored his way out of the upside-down vehicle.

The rain washed over his skin, leading to small rivers of light red streaming across the white painted lines on the road. Moving this way took great force, but he had no other option. He had felt the way his ankle contorted in the crash, and the pressure on the broken bones. Getting up would be no simple feat, but he had no choice. This was a stolen vehicle, and he couldn't be caught with it after the crash.

He managed the strength to lift his head, turning as best as he could.

The white car Tobias was in had crashed more horrifically than Hannibal's had. The roof was nearly caved in, the entire windshield shattered– well, Hannibal's windshield had also shattered. He'd been lucky enough not to be pierced by any broken glass, and he had a very functional airbag in this car.

Tobias was not so lucky.

Tobias flailed a broken arm, attempting to open the door handle, finally being forced to use his non-dominant hand. Hannibal watched as Tobias kicked the door open, as the way it was currently dented didn't allow the force of his arm to do much. Upon the door opening, Tobias fell onto the street, yelling out in pain as he landed on the already broken arm.

He and Hannibal made eye contact.

Either they both died out here, or one of them did.

Before either could make a survival decision, a loud, piercing whistle was heard through the rain. Their heads both turned in the direction it came in.

They were in the middle of nowhere. Who could be out here? Were they seen?

Over ran a…pack of…dogs?

Before Hannibal could react beyond confusion, the pack descended onto Tobias. Hannibal, obscured by his own vehicle (or, well, not so much his own, but the one he'd been driving and subsequently crashed), remained out of their sight.

He watched as Tobias screamed and thrashed, but was unable to prevent himself from being swiftly dragged away by the pack, off of the road and through a large field of grass.

Hannibal allowed himself approximately 10 seconds to remain shocked.

Hannibal forced his eyes to focus as much as they could, although his head was swimming and the heavy rain obscured his vision.

In the distance, some small building. A house

There was no one around him anymore. Not even the fellow killer he'd been chasing after. Hannibal was alone, and he would die out here if he did not move quickly.

Using the car as leverage, he managed to force himself into a standing position, leaning against the overturned vehicle to prevent using his damaged leg.

Looking around, he found a large piece of wooden fencing that had been broken off. This road was too secluded for the usual metal guardrails, it would seem.

Using his makeshift cane, he made his way across the wet grass, toward the building.

The journey took him longer than any human being would have liked. He nearly slipped on quite a few occasions. Despite knowing how injured he was, how humiliating would that have been?

After what seemed like ages, he was finally near it.

An old house, painted white ages ago and now worse for wear, most likely thanks to weather such as this.

Hannibal hobbled up the porch, to the door, and jostled the doorknob.

It opened. How strange.

He limped his way inside, dropping the wood by the door. He managed to shut the door behind him, looking around at his temporary shelter.

This section of the house remained as lit as a home could be in this rain. It was where he could see into further reaches of the house that were completely engulfed in darkness, except for the slivers of light from a single back door. The house was not that large.

He nearly jumped out of his skin when he heard the gentle sound of sniffing by the floor beside him.

A dog he had not seen enter the room sniffed at him, walking all around him. At last, it sat in front of him, mouth open in a panting smile, tail wagging.

Hannibal merely tilted his head slightly at the sight. This was one of the dogs that had dragged Tobias to his assumed demise.

A figure could vaguely be seen before a door on the other side of the house slammed shut. Hannibal attempted to gaze in its direction, but all he saw was darkness.

If this was the location Tobias had been dragged to, then Hannibal was to die either way. Death would merely be another journey, and if it was truly so inevitable, then he may as well explore.

He began limping off in the direction of the sound, the dog trotting behind, keeping its eyes on him.

The door slammed again, and Hannibal pressed himself against a wall where he knew he could not be seen.

The figure swung the basement door open, descending. Footsteps were heard across the entire underside of the house.

“There’s no one out there.”

“Please, I swear he was there. There’s no way he could’ve moved! He was injured! Please–”

Tobias.

“God, stop begging,” the first voice spoke again. The man sounded…irritated. Not so much angry, just irritated, as if Tobias’ voice was just a noise that worsened a headache.

The dog beside Hannibal moved into the basement without him.

Little traitor.

If the man knew he was there, he did not make it known. Hannibal took a risk and moved ahead, peeking downstairs before descending.

The walls were completely stone. The room was closer to a mausoleum, though there was one singular open tomb, completely empty aside from a single ratty pillow. For some reason, the coffin was lined with a towel. How odd. Down the hall (Odd for a basement to have halls. Hannibal wondered how long each one went on for), a room that appeared to be lit by candlelight, though Hannibal could not see its contents.

“Please, I–I’ll do whatever you want. You want money? I know a man with a lot of money–”

Planning to break into Hannibal’s home again already, was he? Pathetic.

“I don’t want you or anyone else’s money, Tobias. Is insulting all you’re capable of?”

Hannibal paused briefly. This man knew who Tobias was, somehow.

The dog returned, panting happily. And then the horrible little creature sniffed at Hannibal again, nosing directly at his broken ankle.

He couldn’t hold back a hiss of pain.

The shadows of the room down the hall shifted.

“He’s here– He’s here! See? I told you he was–”

“Panic doesn’t look good on you, Tobias. Your voice barely even changes. If someone’s here, that’s my problem.”

There was a brief silence.

“What are you gonna do to me?”

Hannibal blinked, processing the speech. Tobias sounded truly frightened at this moment.

What on Earth was in that room that could leave a man like *Tobias Budge* frightened? Or, better yet, whom?

Hannibal was snapped out of his thoughts by the sound of screams.

Tobias was screaming in agony. And judging by the way it was already beginning to filter off, Tobias was dying quickly.

Hannibal made a move toward the stairs, only to be met by just about every dog in that damned pack blocking his way. They sniffed the air, as if what they were doing was completely innocent. Hannibal could feel his heart pounding in his ears. He had never been one to allow himself to be panicked, not in a very long time, but every sense in his body was telling him that he had to leave *now* , and–

“You shouldn’t be here.”

Hannibal turned around, eyes wide.

He settled almost immediately.

The man in front of him, illuminated by the candle he held, was nearly his size, though not quite. Shadows from the flame were cast across his near perfect jawline, scraps of a beard, the glasses across his eyes, and the curls atop his head that peeked out over his ears.

He wore simple clothes, a dark flannel and dark jeans. Almost odd for a man such as himself, though Hannibal didn't know him at all.

And he was pale. Obscenely pale.

"I apologize for entering without permission," Hannibal began, "I'm sure you're aware of how hard it has been raining outside. My car–"

"You crashed."

Hannibal simply nodded, opting not to focus on being interrupted. This is the man who had just slaughtered Tobias after having his seemingly friendly pack of dogs drag his injured body here. Focusing on every minute irritation would do him no good in this situation.

"How did you know who Mr. Budge was, if I may ask?" Hannibal asked, putting on his best innocent voice that he could muster.

The man did not seem amused. "Everyone was looking for a killer in the area. I knew it was him."

"How did you know?"

"Music shop owner. He turned someone into a cello. Just sort of clicked."

Hannibal focused on the man's mouth now. Every time he spoke, he looked away. Actually, he kept looking away. Eye contact did not seem to be his strong suit, but more than anything, Hannibal noted his inability to see the man's mouth as it opened at all.

How odd.

“And what did you do with him?”

The man in front of him blinked, and his expression shifted slightly.

Regret?

“You really need to go. It’s not safe for you here.”

"Not safe for me, or not safe because of you?" Hannibal asked, gazing at this man with keen interest.

The man nearly winced. "Both."

Hannibal went to respond, but found himself hissing again as a dog pushed its snout against his ankle, whining at its owner afterward.

The man’s brow furrowed. “You break something?”

“My ankle,” Hannibal answered simply. “I’m afraid that leaves me quite unable to run.”

The man finally made eye contact. He did not seem to appreciate the dark humor as much as Hannibal did. Hannibal had definitely inserted a hidden joke there.

"I cannot run. You can do as you wish. Whatever would you do to me?"

The candle was put out suddenly, and Hannibal once more felt rather cold as though he were outside.

Then came a steady hand on his arm, which he managed not to flinch away from. The man slid an arm around him, beginning to guide him down the hall.

“This way. I’ll help with your ankle, but then you have to go.”

“Very well,” Hannibal said, swallowing.

Hannibal knew the scent of the man’s breath all too well. That coppery metallic scent.

“May I ask how you ingested some part of him so quickly?”

The man froze. “...What?”

“I’m afraid I’m too familiar with the scent of blood, Mr…?”

The man shook his head. “No. We don’t know each other, and we’re not going to.”

Before Hannibal could protest, the man continued dragging him down the hall with what now felt like strength that was about thrice what he had a moment prior.

Interesting.

Perhaps the reason Hannibal had not been allowed a proper look at his host’s mouth was because there was still blood staining the inside. What a sight that would be.

As he was brought into the candlelit room, the man had Hannibal lean against the doorway.

Tobias sat in the one actual chair the room had, hunched over. He was very much dead, the side of his neck having quite a large gash in it.

The room was composed of darker stone than the mausoleum of the other room, and the floor around the edges was covered in bones.

One skeleton was completely intact, propped up in the far corner. The wearer had a cross necklace.

Hannibal was no superstitious man, but he was no fool, either.

Secluded area. Command over a pack of hounds that remain completely docile otherwise. Dragging in an injured killer (or two). Frightening a man previously unable to be frightened (...or two). Coppery breath. Bloody mouth. Dark home without an ounce of whatever remnants of daylight could enter. Tomb basement with a singular resting place. One untouched soul in the house being a result of a cross necklace.

Hannibal swallowed as the man removed Tobias' corpse from the seat, tossing it against a nearby wall before coming to retrieve Hannibal, guiding him to the very same seat.

"A splint should do," the man said quietly, beginning to grab some supplies he had apparently kept in the drawers of the table to the side.

By all accounts, Hannibal *should* be terrified. But he could not bring himself to be. Everything about this man intrigued him in a way that no one else had before. Not to mention, this man was quite literally the stuff of legend. And here he was, attempting to care for Hannibal while also attempting to maintain some shred of his solitude.

And he was beautiful, inside and out.

Hannibal reached down, pulling his injured leg onto a stool that was fortunate enough to be nearby.

“I’m afraid that won’t work,” he spoke up, slightly startling the man, who promptly turned around with narrowed eyes.

“Why not?”

“My ankle is far too swollen,” Hannibal said as innocently as he could, gesturing to the mass of purple that used to be an ankle. “Splints will do nothing right now.”

The man’s fingers twitched slightly, as did one eye.

“...Too much blood collected,” he said quietly, more to himself than anything.

Hannibal nodded.

“I suppose we could ice it first,” Hannibal suggested. It was far from what he was hoping for.

The man made solid eye contact finally. He looked deeply uncomfortable.

“I don’t…have any ice,” he said sheepishly.

“That’s too bad,” Hannibal replied, maintaining his feigned innocence. “I suppose it could be *drained* with the proper tools…”

The man swallowed harshly. “ *Drained* ?”

“Yes.”

Here it was. A man who was beyond his match, but with the same shared *taste* . And he was about to–

The man took a step back, cringing.

“You know, don’t you?”

Hannibal blinked.

“...Yes,” he replied simply. “I figured you were in a unique position to–”

“You could die. *Very* easily. Are you not aware of that?”

“I very much am. What other options do I have? I'm alone and injured during a storm. What ever could I do?” Hannibal replied with an amused lilt to his voice. He had to keep himself from breaking into a grin when he saw the man visibly cringe harder.

“I’m not doing that to you,” the man asserted. “I only… *hunt* people like him. You’re not a bad man.”

“I assure you,” Hannibal said, smiling at last, “I’m worse than you could ever imagine.”

The man looked between Hannibal’s face and his ankle, swallowing hard once again.

Hannibal took the opportunity.

“I would hate to lose it…” Hannibal said with a sigh. “I suppose I could adjust to life as an amputee, but keeping my foot would be ideal.”

The man blinked, now seeming concerned. “Lose it? Is it really bad enough to…?”

“I’m afraid so,” Hannibal said with a nod. “I was a trauma surgeon in years past, I’m afraid I know what a foot at risk of amputation looks like. Would you be so kind as to help me prevent such a horrible thing?”

The man looked like he wanted to die. Hannibal was practically batting his eyelashes at him.

The man adjusted his glasses. “...Just drain the swelling…”

“That is all I ask of you,” Hannibal assured him.

The man took a deep breath, removing his glasses entirely and placing them on a nearby table. He knelt beside the injured leg.

“...This is gonna–”

“Hurt, yes, I’m aware. I heard Tobias scream.”

The man sighed, though it was nearly a groan. “Could you at least try not to do that?”

Hannibal gave a friendly smile. “I shall do my best.”

Another deep breath. Hannibal felt hands around either side of the wound, then–

He gripped the armrests of the arm chair, determined to follow through with his assurance. Despite the pain of fangs, he almost let out a low groan of relief as he felt the pressure around his wound subside.

It was unlike anything he had ever felt in his life. Despite the pain, this man was doing everything he could to be gentle. Hannibal had never imagined experiencing such a phenomenon. With anyone else, he would finally begin to wonder if he was going to die. But with this man, it was ecstasy. He was able to hold himself back from screaming as requested, but he was gasping over the feeling of long teeth puncturing his leg, a warm mouth over a warm wound, warm enamel inside warm flesh. It was beautiful. It was *obscene* .

It was over. The mouth was removed.

Hannibal took a deep breath, gazing at his newfound hero. Whoever this man was, he had enough self-control to stop with ease. The man seemed uncomfortable, turning away from him and wiping his face on a nearby cloth, swallowing down whatever remained in his mouth.

He put a hand on his stomach, steadying himself. The poor thing was full. No wonder, considering he had already consumed an entire man's worth of blood beforehand.

Hannibal wondered if eating more than one person at a time was abnormal for his new vampiric friend. That was concerning.

Hannibal gazed at him in what he could only imagine was a similar manner to the way those in millenia past gazed at their prophets. His existence couldn’t be true, and yet it was.

The man caught him staring, and almost looked embarrassed.

“Do I get your name now, good sir?” Hannibal asked softly from his seat.

The man seemed to internally debate it, but finally cleared his throat, putting his glasses back on.

“Will,” he replied. “Will Graham.”

“Will,” Hannibal repeated, as though he had just learned the true name of God.

“...Tobias said yours was Hannibal Lecter,” Will said simply. Hannibal nodded in response, pleased with the way his name sounded in Will’s mouth.

There Will was again, by his side, this time placing the splints he had promised

Will finally met Hannibal’s gaze, and he met it with a look of concern.

“You have, uh…lots of cuts.”

“Vehicular accidents and pavement will do that to you.”

“I can imagine,” Will said, cringing. “Hang on.”

Will turned back to the table, rummaging around for more supplies. Finally, he knelt by Hannibal once more.

“Hold still,” he said softly, cupping Hannibal’s jaw with one hand and dabbing at his facial wounds with a cloth dipped in peroxide in the other.

Hannibal gazed at him with soft admiration, despite his wounds now stinging. “I figured you would’ve found a more creative way to clean them.”

“I don’t need more of your blood.”

“Implying you needed some to begin with?”

“Not what I meant in the slightest.”

Hannibal smiled. “You’re welcome to more if you’d like.”

Will huffed. “Never had a volunteer before.”

“Is it so odd? Certainly you have not been on the modern day internet.”

Will let out a short, almost pained laugh. “Don’t remind me.”

They remained close to one another as Will dabbed at various wounds along Hannibal’s body. Just when Will thought this guy couldn’t be hurt further, Hannibal would tug away part of an article of clothing, revealing another scrape or cut.

“How did you and Tobias Budge end up in such a heated car chase anyway?” Will asked at last.

“Tobias wanted a friend,” Hannibal replied flatly. “I did not want to be his. I thought I had made it abundantly clear, but he showed up at my home regardless. The result was us attempting to one-up the other, with him very bitter about being rejected. He stole a car after killing one of my patients, so I stole his and went after him.”

Will nodded. “Sounds like something someone like him would do.”

"That cello murder you mentioned?"

Before Hannibal could elaborate, Will's eyes widened.

"He was playing for you."

"Yes he was."

"Son of a bitch…"

Hannibal laughed. "Quite."

Will paused, finally making eye contact. The cogs of his mind were turning now, Hannibal could see it.

He knew.

He continued dabbing at wounds anyway, as if he hadn’t had any realization at all. A killer with a killer made no innocent men in this room.

"So that's what you meant."

"Meant by what?"

"When you said you were worse than I could imagine."

Hannibal couldn't help but beam under the recognition. "What do you think, Will?"

Will huffed. "I think I'm worse than *you* could imagine."

Hannibal's eyes practically sparkled at that.

“I’m curious,” he began, “Tobias told you my name, and yet made no mention of my history?”

“He said you were trying to kill *him* ,” Will explained. “He didn’t say anything about killing other people.”

At last, there were no more injuries to show (much to Hannibal’s dismay). Will set the cloth back on the table to clean later.

“You look exhausted,” Will admitted with a wry twist of his mouth.

Hannibal simply nodded. “I’m afraid it’s been quite a long day. My body almost feels as though I was in a car crash.”

Will looked away to prevent himself from laughing, but his smile had shown up so quickly it was obvious. Hannibal smiled in return. How beautiful the sight of Will being happy already was to him.

“Do you, uh,” Will began, rubbing the back of his neck. “Do you need somewhere to stay? It’s still pouring out there, and I don’t think you should be traveling in this rain…You kinda made it obvious on the road that you can’t.”

Hannibal huffed softly, amused. “I would love somewhere to spend the evening, if you would have me.”

Will nodded, standing up. He reached down, helping Hannibal to his feet with what felt like the strength of three men. Hannibal hardly needed to move at all as he was led down the hall and to the stairs.

Will glanced up, then back at Hannibal.

"I can manage on one leg. I made it down well enough," Hannibal assured.

Will shook his head, and then–

In one swift movement, Will was carrying him.

Hannibal, startled, wrapped his arms around Will's neck. Despite knowing of the man's strength from earlier, he still found himself surprised. He imagined this man would never cease to amaze him. He looked at Will reverently, feeling heat come to his cheeks.

"You better not be getting a fever now," Will sighed.

Hannibal smiled softly. "I assure you I am not."

They were nearly at the top when Hannibal suddenly grabbed at the wall, trying to stop them.

“The light,” he said. “Will it–”

Will actually laughed. “No. That’s an old myth. I just prefer the dark is all.”

Hannibal let out a breath he didn’t know he was holding, nodding.

“I would presume there are other misconceptions as well?”

“Plenty.”

“Such as the aversion to crosses?”

Will grimaced. “You saw her skeleton, didn’t you? Yeah…She was screaming like a fucking banshee. I just let her stay there ‘til she passed out from exhaustion.”

“And then you fed yourself without much issue?”

“You’re very interested in my eating habits, Hannibal.”

“Forgive me, Will.”

He allowed himself to be carried to a bed in the main room. It wasn’t the highest quality, but it was covered in several blankets and pillows, which made it quite tolerable. It also seemed to be rarely used. Hannibal was ever so gently set down on it, wincing as he attempted to shift in a way that didn’t irritate every part of him that hurt.

Will glanced at him as if conflicted. Hannibal’s eyes must have shown a certain hope, because Will came to sit at the edge of the bed.

Hannibal couldn’t tell if his veil was slipping, or if this man could simply read what was behind it regardless of the obscurity. It made him all the more alluring to be around.

“Would it be a bother to rest here?” Hannibal asked, his voice now weak from the strain.

Will gave him a small, friendly smile. “That’s what the bed’s for.”

Hannibal wanted to accept the offer straight away, more than anything on this Earth, but this man seemed to not have guests often, if at all. His presence must be making a huge difference. He surely must clarify if it’s truly alright that he–

Will’s palm pressed onto Hannibal’s forehead. All at once, Hannibal realized that the hand was warm, most likely from the copious amounts of blood he had drank.

It was a welcome sense of soothing, and Hannibal allowed his eyes to close.

He no longer wondered if he would make it out alive.

Come morning, he was going to do everything he could to extend his stay.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading! if you want a part 2 of this i'd be glad to write one. there's always more room for hannibal obsessing over will, especially in this context

find me over on tumblr: @ stranded-labyrinth

update: yes, there will be a part 2. stay tuned :]

Your Gracious Host

Chapter Summary

Hannibal discovers that Will is hungry.

Chapter Notes

i don't even know what to say, i am still so blown away by all the comments i've received. i didn't expect this to gain that much traction, i figured this would just be a silly one-and-done one shot. thank you all so much for the support!

also, warning for minor alana bashing in this? not really, she's just concerned and will is just irritated.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal’s eyes fluttered open, though after feeling his head throb, he wished they hadn’t.

The events of the previous evening replayed in his mind as he became fully awake. Judging by the light outside, Hannibal knew immediately that he must have been sleeping for quite some time. Perhaps because his body truly needed it, or perhaps because his lovely host had made it so.

As Hannibal shifted slightly in the bed, he realized that he felt a weight on the other side.

His heart practically seized.

Surely not. Could it be…? Did Will forgo his typical crypt in favor of sharing this space with him? Will, it was safe to assume, did not actually require sleep. Could he have stayed here to keep an eye on Hannibal? His capacity for concern had already shown itself beautifully. Could then watching the way a human rested have prompted him to try it himself? Or perhaps he did require some sleep after all, and felt comfortable enough to do so?

Hannibal could hear beast-like breathing behind him. It had to be. It *was* .

Hannibal turned onto his opposite side slowly…

The large dog beside him snored peacefully. Hannibal had never been so viscerally disappointed in his life.

Impossible fantasies aside, where *was* Will?

Hannibal did his best to sit up on his own, gazing around the room. The other eight hounds had taken their places on the floor. Some remained sleeping, while others stared at Hannibal, heads tilted innocently.

“Where oh where has your master gone?” Hannibal asked the one closest to him. The dog did not reply.

Hannibal sighed, rising from the bed. Will was either in another part of the house, most likely the basement, or he was not here at all. Hannibal stepped forward–

…without any pain?

He glanced downward, looking confusedly at his completely healed ankle. He pressed his foot on the floor to test. Yes, it was most definitely fully healed. When the realization set in, he could feel his chest ache with the longing to know what other beautiful abilities his dear vampire had up his sleeve.

Hannibal felt his face momentarily, then rolled his sleeves to look at his arms. Every scrape on his body was gone. Could a single bite have done such a thing?

Perhaps it couldn't. Perhaps the oh so gentle Will had taken care of him better than he thought.

Hannibal knew damn well that Will would not have done such a thing. The image of lips and sharp teeth over his wounds stained his mind regardless.

One could hope for what the future holds.

He turned as the back door swung open. The dogs panted excitedly.

Will's brows raised slightly in acknowledgement. "You're up."

"You've healed me. How ever did you do such a thing?"

Will gave a wry smile, shutting the door behind him. "It's, uh…a lesser known ability, I guess."

"With just one bite?"

"You were going on about needing an amputation. Can you blame me for being careful?"

Hannibal felt a dull ache in his chest. Will had been worried about him. Genuinely worried. Enough to share that beautiful ability so generously.

"I apologize for worrying you," Hannibal said. Will simply nodded. "Where were you, if I may ask?"

"Oh, uh–" Will glanced at the door momentarily. On his back porch was a container of rabbit corpses. "Getting food for the pack."

“Hunting?” Hannibal failed to hide the sliver of hope in his voice.

“Hunting,” Will replied flatly. “I can’t exactly just go into town and grab pet food.”

“Why not?”

Will swallowed, no longer looking in Hannibal’s direction. He had already not been making eye contact, which Hannibal became accustomed to in their brief meeting, but now he seemed uncomfortable.

“I don’t like scaring people,” Will finally said.

“Do you believe your mere presence would frighten someone?” Hannibal asked.

“Yes.”

“You did not frighten me.”

“You’re a killer.”

Hannibal grinned at that. “Even so. You have a right to exist in other spaces, Will.”

Will grimaced slightly. “Having a right to doesn’t mean I should.”

Hannibal approached, head tilted. “I think taking care of creatures you love should outweigh the discomfort of others. It is not as if you’re threatening them.”

Will took a step back, brows knitted. “My presence is a threat.”

Hannibal was standing in front of him now. “Is that so?”

He could see Will’s nostrils flare slightly. Will looked away from him. Hannibal’s grin turned into a more genuine smile.

“Are you hungry?”

“Yes,” Will said quietly.

Hannibal’s pupils dilated. Will was hungry. Not the same as the evening before, in which he drank out of obligation. This was genuine hunger. Hannibal’s scent must be unbearable, then. It would appear Will would get hungry at regular intervals, like humans do. *Fascinating* .

And Hannibal wanted to repay him. He wanted to repay him dearly for his care. He undid the top buttons of his shirt, tugging it down on one side, leaving the whole junction of his neck and shoulder bare.

“I don’t believe I heard you clearly,” Hannibal said softly. “I asked, are you hungry, Will?”

Will couldn’t help but look. He saw the throbbing pulse of Hannibal’s neck, fully exposed to the air of the room. Volunteered for him.

Suddenly, Will shoved him away.

“Don’t do that!”

Hannibal blinked, regaining his balance. “Do what, Will?”

“ *That!* You’re– You’re risking your *life* ! Do you not get that? I could *kill* you!”

Hannibal gazed at him with curiosity. “Do you often fear you’ll kill someone without intending to? Do you fear your own capacity to kill despite what you are?”

“I know what I am,” Will said sharply. “That doesn’t mean I have to like it.”

Hannibal’s smile faltered. Will was self-conscious. Will, a creature that was the subject of all of humanity’s darkest terrors and brightest senses of beauty, was *self-conscious* .

That would have to be fixed.

“...May I ask you something, Will?”

“What is it?”

“To sustain yourself, must you consume blood specifically?”

Will swallowed. “No. I mean– It has to have *some* blood in it, I can’t just go for dried meat.”

“So long as it’s human, it will sustain you?” Hannibal asked, the hopeful lilt back in his voice.

Will nodded. Hannibal’s eyes practically sparkled.

“I would like to cook for you,” he found himself saying.

Will looked at him, confused. “What, do you intend to cut off a limb?”

“No need,” Hannibal said with a grin. “I have the necessary materials at home.”

Will remained confused, then all at once his expression shifted into realization.

“You eat your kills.”

“Precisely.”

Will rubbed his face, groaning. “What the *fuck* , Hannibal…”

“I did not think that would end up being a problem for you, Will.”

“I *have* to do it, you don’t!”

“I’m afraid you do not know very much about me, then,” Hannibal said simply. He hoped that that would change in the future.

——

“How long have you had this car, Will?”

Will shrugged, hands on the wheel. “Ten years, I think.”

Hannibal thought for a moment. Perhaps it would be too inappropriate to ask, but there was no time like the present.

“How old are you, Will?”

“36.”

Hannibal blinked. “How…long have you been 36?”

“Eight months.”

Will glanced over, seeing the confusion on Hannibal’s face, and laughed. “We’re not all several centuries old, Hannibal.”

“Evidently not. Is it not more difficult to adjust in the modern age?”

Will shrugged. “Not if people already know.”

If Hannibal wasn’t surprised before, he sure was now. “You allow people to know about you?”

“Not much of a choice,” Will explained. “I worked in the FBI. Can’t exactly hide yourself after that.”

Hannibal leaned his head against the seat. So there were *two* reasons why Will wasn’t shocked to be around killers.

Suddenly, Hannibal could feel his blood boil.

"It was a case you were working on, wasn't it?" he asked, maintaining calm in his voice. "Someone you were hunting down professionally hunted you not-so-professionally."

Will nodded. Whether or not the memory troubled him was difficult to glean. "I got too close. My supervisor got into the most trouble you can get into without getting fired."

"Why is that?"

"Because he was specifically warned not to let me get too close."

Hannibal considered that for a moment. "An odd conspiracy, the FBI knowing about the existence of vampires…What was your role?"

"Profiler. Hyperempathy helped with that."

"Did it?"

"I could get into their headspace. Feel what they felt."

Hannibal nodded. "Did this bother you?"

"Oh absolutely," Will said with a dry laugh. "Everyone used to think I was some kind of monster for it. Now I really am one. You reap what you sow, I guess."

There the feeling was again. Fury. Hannibal turned away from Will, nose twitching softly as he attempted to compose himself. The idea that those who knew Will had shunned him in such a way was infuriating. And the idea that they shunned him now that he was something even more beautiful was almost physically painful to think about.

Will pulled in front of the house, squinting at what he saw by the door. “What the…?”

Hannibal beat him to exiting the car, as the passenger side was by the sidewalk.

“Alana,” Hannibal said calmly.

Alana turned, relief flooding over her face as she ran over. “Hannibal! Where the hell have you been? Everyone has been looking for you! Your car was still here, but you–”

She cut herself off, frozen in place as she watched Will exit the car, approaching the two on the sidewalk.

“Alana,” Will greeted flatly.

She swallowed. “Will,” she acknowledged quietly.

Hannibal’s brows raised in interest. “You two know each other?”

“We did,” Will said. “How do you know each other?”

“He was my mentor at John Hopkin’s,” Alana explained. Her voice was still quiet. Hannibal watched her with keen interest.

She was afraid. Afraid of Will.

“Why are you here, Will?” she gathered the confidence to ask.

“Just here with my house guest,” Will replied plainly.

Alana’s eyes widened, looking between the two.

“You– You said you would only hunt bad people. You *promised* ,” she began to argue, her voice a mix of fearful and angry.

“Alana.”

She turned to Hannibal.

“He has no plan to kill me. As a matter of fact, he saved my life.”

Alana’s brow furrowed in confusion. She looked at Will.

“Oh, now you care about an explanation?” he hissed.

“Damn it, Will– You *know* why we’re afraid.”

“Not like that’s changed since before.”

She went quiet. She truly had no response to that.

“He was being hunted by the killer that turned that player into a cello,” Will decided to explain. “It was storming, they crashed. Guy’s name was Tobias Budge, he was a music shop owner.”

Alana swallowed. “And what happened to Tobias Budge?”

Will simply stared at her. They both knew that she knew.

“If I may be so rude as to interrupt,” Hannibal said, amused, “I do believe I have a guest to attend to.”

Alana looked at him sharply. “Hannibal, you can’t seriously be considering inviting him into your home. There’s no going back after that.”

“I’m afraid not everyone is as paranoid as you,” Hannibal retorted.

Alana looked at him as if he had just spit in her face. Will didn’t even attempt to hide his amusement.

Hannibal turned toward Will once more. “If you would be so kind as to follow me, Mr. Graham. I believe it is still early enough for brunch.”

Will nodded, following. Alana’s eyes went wider than before.

“Brun– No. No! Hannibal, *no* –!” She ran in front of the door, blocking them from entering. “ *Hannibal* . I can’t let you do that to yourself.”

Will adjusted his jaw, visibly growing agitated. “Alana?”

She looked at him.

“Move or I will *move you* .”

Her assertiveness no longer hid her fear. She glanced at Hannibal, hoping for some sort of backup. Hannibal gave her none. He simply nodded along with Will’s words.

She had no choice. She finally relented, stepping out of their way.

“You better let him out alive, Will,” she said, her voice shaking as tears welled in her eyes.

Will turned to her, brows raised.

“...Or *what* ?”

Hannibal was rather grateful that facing the door hid his reaction to those words. Will did not need to be startled off by just how eager Hannibal was already.

Alana finally stormed off to her car, leaving the two in peace. Will turned to Hannibal.

“She usually that protective over you?”

“I’m afraid I do not know what came over her,” Hannibal said, swallowing down his excitement as he began to unlock the door.

Hannibal opened the door, holding it with an outstretched arm as he turned to Will with a smile.

“Please, do come in, Will Graham,” he said carefully.

Will rolled his eyes, entering. “You don’t have to lay it on so thick. She wasn’t even right about needing to be invited in.”

Fortunately, Will being ahead of Hannibal made it so he did not see Hannibal force down a shudder at the thought. Will could enter wherever he pleased. A delightful thing to know.

“Is that so? Do the people that know you care so little for the truth about you?”

“Basically,” Will said. “They only acknowledge what they’re forced to see, like me in the sunlight. They didn’t ever exactly invite me over anywhere. They didn’t care before, why would they care now?”

Hannibal shut the door behind them, pensive now. He found himself obligated to show this man what true care would look like. He did not care how long it would take. He was a patient man, typically, though that seemed to be faltering around Will.

Hannibal made his way to the kitchen. “This way, Will.”

Will, brow raised, followed.

———

Will looked around at the steel cabinets. “Wow…”

Hannibal beamed with pride, beginning to prepare his stove. “I keep everything as clean as I can. Cross contamination will occur in this kitchen over my dead body.”

Will grinned a bit. “Yeah. Hate for someone to have an allergic reaction to someone’s arm.”

Hannibal couldn’t stifle a laugh. He looked up at Will with admiration. Such a transformation in confidence from yesterday.

Hannibal pulled out a pan. “I must admit, Will, I am surprised to see you so comfortable here. You were so hesitant before.”

Will shrugged. “I guess it’s easier when I know I’m not the only one ripping into human flesh. Odd, isn’t it?”

“Not at all. It is always comforting to relate to those around you.”

Will nodded, continuing to look around, though not invading the cooking area. This pleased Hannibal greatly.

“Yeah. Maybe part of it is spite.”

Hannibal glanced up once more, grinning. “You wish to spite Dr. Bloom?”

“We had a bit of a rough road. That, and you’re a grown man, Hannibal. While I can’t understand why the hell you would invite me in, it’s also not her decision to make.”

Hannibal nodded. “I appreciate you respecting my free will. Please excuse me for a moment.”

And into the basement Hannibal descended.

He suddenly felt as though the pressure was on. He had to find an adequate cut of meat for Will. This was not an average guest that would be pleased with just about anything.

He ran his hand along the shelves, thinking hard. What would be enough to satisfy both of their hungers?

“The thigh looks good.”

Hannibal jolted, turning around. He had never in his life allowed another person down here, and the presence of one now was jarring.

“Will,” he said simply, readjusting his posture.

Will grinned.

“...You’re easier to scare than you think,” was all he said before ascending back to the kitchen.

Hannibal did not allow himself to think too much about that. He could not lose focus now.

Though part of him, one hopeful part of him, thought for a moment that perhaps that had been Will’s goal.

———

“If you do not mind me asking,” Hannibal began after a sip of wine, “what led to your distaste for Dr. Bloom?”

Will swallowed a piece of thigh, huffing. “She was a friend at first. Then it became increasingly clear I was a sort of experiment to her.”

“In what way?”

“A lot of ways. She was always interested in what made me tick, but still tried to play at being friends even after that became apparent. I didn’t want to play that game anymore, so she tried to play doctor instead.”

“She tried to be your psychiatrist?”

“No, she tried to set me up with one. Claimed it was out of concern. When I told her that me and that guy weren’t compatible in the slightest, all that concern became frustration.”

“She went from trying to be your friend to trying to parent you,” Hannibal said slowly.

Will nodded. “She didn’t see it that way, and she was offended that I did. We didn’t talk until after I got turned.”

Hannibal sighed. “I must say, that is not the Alana Bloom I mentored.”

“People change, I guess. Especially after years. I think part of it was that she *did* deal with a lot of difficult patients. It’s what she was used to.”

“That did not make you her patient.”

“Everyone is her patient,” Will said dryly. “It’s her job to analyze. She can’t turn it off any more than I can. I just wish she left me alone when I asked her to.”

Hannibal took another sip of his wine. “I suppose, in some way, you got your wish.”

Will laughed softly. “Yeah. Guess I did.”

“She mentioned some sort of agreement you had?”

Will nodded with a hum, swallowing down another piece of meat. “Yeah. Everyone was all panicked when I got turned, so I assured them I would only go after the worst of the worst.”

Hannibal nodded. “The rude.”

Will looked at him quizzically. “...Well usually a bit more than that, but sure.”

Hannibal laughed softly. “I was joking.” He was not joking.

“Either way,” Will went on, “that’s what I’ve been up to ever since. Just staying home unless I need to get food for myself or my dogs. I usually just get wild animals for the dogs.”

“I imagine they are very appreciative of you hunting for them,” Hannibal said.

Will nodded.

“...Has anyone ever hunted for you?” Hannibal asked.

Will looked up at him. “...No. No they have not.”

“I see. Would you be opposed to it?”

“I guess it depends.”

Hannibal smiled, finishing off the last bit of his meal. When he swallowed and washed it down with wine, he looked over at Will again.

“Why didn’t you tell her what I was?”

Will grinned. “And get you locked up? Not when I’ve finally started to find you interesting.”

Hannibal’s heart played a loud melody in his chest.

At last, Will was finished with his meal. Hannibal took both of their plates, setting them in the kitchen to be cleaned. Will stood in the doorway, watching.

Watching.

Hannibal tried to act as though he didn’t feel Will’s eyes burning through him. It was a rather difficult performance.

At last, Hannibal came to join him in the doorway. He straightened his posture.

“Will.”

“Yes?”

“I would like to hunt for you.”

Will grinned. “Would you? Isn’t that sweet.”

Hannibal could feel heat coming to his face. He couldn’t tell if he was being mocked or courted. From Will, both options were equally thrilling in their own right.

“I’m completely serious,” Hannibal asserted. “My passion is in my kitchen. You appear to get hungry at the typical intervals that humans do. I would rather know that you are being fed properly than have you waiting around for another car accident to drop a serial killer on your front lawn.”

Will’s expression was unreadable. He took a step toward Hannibal, and after several silent seconds, he reached a hand up, cupping Hannibal’s face in a cool palm.

Hannibal nearly buckled, but he forced himself to remain upright.

“...Are you lonely, Hannibal?” Will asked softly.

Hannibal gazed directly into his eyes. “More than anything. Until now.”

“You know what I need.”

“And I want nothing more than to give it to you.”

“Your devotion is too quick, Hannibal.”

“I’ll go at whatever pace you want me to if it allows me to see you again.”

Will rubbed Hannibal's cheekbone with his thumb. Hannibal closed his eyes, resting his face into Will's hand. Calm. Relaxed.

Will wanted to disrupt it.

"Hannibal?"

His eyes opened. "Yes, Will?"

"The meal was wonderful."

Hannibal smiled. "I'm glad you enjoyed it."

Will's eyes flared with something dark. It made Hannibal's entire spine tingle.

"...I'm still hungry."

Hannibal swallowed harshly. Will was still hungry.

Hannibal reached for his collar, unbuttoning the top button. "I can prepare a dessert. Any kind you want." A fake deflection. They both knew Will would refuse.

Will smiled, shaking his head. "No. The meal really was *wonderful* ."

Will brought his hand to Hannibal's chest, and leaned in until his mouth was nearly touching Hannibal's ear.

“ *I want to know what it makes your blood taste like.* ”

Hannibal shuddered, swiftly undoing more of his buttons, yanking his collar away.

Will put a hand on top of Hannibal’s. “Calm down.”

Hannibal gazed at his eyes once more. “I need to feed you.”

Will shook his head. “No. You don’t *need* to do anything for me. It has to be a *want* , Hannibal.”

Hannibal’s pupils were blown wide. “I want to feed you. I want so deeply it has become a need. Please, Will. Let me feed you.”

Will gave a sweet little smile, cupping both sides of Hannibal’s face.

“...Alright.”

His left hand snaked around until he had a hold on Hannibal’s hair, his right hand pulling the shirt out of the way.

Hannibal almost screamed when he felt the teeth sink into his neck.

There was no pain of a broken limb to distract from the feeling this time. He felt the pierce of two sharp fangs, he felt the full bite. He felt the cold, cold mouth becoming warm with his blood.

He could feel the walls of his artery as the blood was sucked out, the way it moved in reverse of where it was meant to go.

He couldn't help the noises that escaped. Will was not taking full mouthfuls, he was taking tiny sips at a time. Teasing. Knowing Hannibal could feel every bit of it this time around, pinned against the doorway, knees already beginning to shake.

"Will–" Hannibal managed to get out, holding on tightly to the back of Will's flannel. "*Please* ."

Will was not one to take orders, but he would accept requests.

He tightened his grip in Hannibal's hair, forcing his head further to the side as he buried his teeth deeper and gave one, long suck.

The gasp it emitted was beautiful. Hannibal's breathing was heavy, with low groans making themselves known as Will went on. Hannibal was hyper-aware of every vein and artery in that area, and the way that his blood felt against the walls of those veins as it was rapidly sucked out of them.

Hannibal's hands were scrambling for purchase across Will's back, gripping what they could to allow him to steady himself. His words were nonsense, but Will could still recognize his name through them.

That had to be fixed.

Will pulled off, sinking his teeth into Hannibal's shoulder. Hannibal yelped loudly, gripping Will to him in a plea for more that he could no longer vocalize. Will sucked from his shoulder, only to move to his clavicle and sink his teeth around it, sucking from there as well. Hannibal's eyes rolled back. There were no longer audible words coming from him.

Then, and only then, did Will finally let go, assisting him in sinking down to the floor.

Hannibal panted, his back pressed to the doorway, his fringe slicked to his forehead with sweat. He was a complete and utter mess.

Will was on his knees in front of him, wrapping his arms around him, pulling Hannibal toward him.

Hannibal let his head fall into the crook between Will's neck and shoulder, relishing in how warm it had become from Hannibal's blood coursing through him.

Will gently stroked a hand through Hannibal's hair, soothing him until his breathing evened out at last.

"You did good," Will softly assured him. "You did very good. I'm proud of you. I'll make sure you're alright."

In his stomach, Hannibal could feel what he could only attribute to the feeling of butterflies. Receiving praise from Will was the highest honor, he knew that. It was a gift. A beautiful gift.

He cherished it, allowing himself to relax into Will's arms, being held close as the wounds on his neck and shoulder vanished.

Chapter End Notes

i still don't know how i managed to get this out in a day, but i did it. hope you enjoyed!

once again, go find me on tumblr.

To Those Who Would Threaten Him

Chapter Summary

Hannibal discovers Will in an awful state, and offers his assistance.

Chapter Notes

sorry for the wait! i kept rewriting this chapter because i wasn't satisfied with how it was going. hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Despite everything, Hannibal was obligated to return to daily life.

He had patients to take care of, after all. He still felt some sense of obligation to them the way he typically had, though while they had never been on the forefront of his mind, they were even less so now.

Hannibal had found that his thoughts were almost always shrouded in the cloak of memories of Will. It was as if the hall he had dedicated in his memory palace to the man was never allowed to close, not even temporarily. During his waking hours, all he could think was what his mundane tasks would be like with Will by his side. During his sleeping hours, his dreams were coated in the bliss of fantasies about a life they could have together.

The office, as brightly lit as it was, felt dull in comparison to Will’s presence.

It was almost a torment of its own. When Will returned home, Hannibal couldn’t help but feel like a domesticated pet, whining at the front door, awaiting his return. If done for anyone else, it would be nothing short of humiliating. But it was for Will.

Far more could be tolerated for Will.

Hannibal had never gotten to know what Will was like as a profiler. Surely the man had been prolific in the art of studying minds if he had gotten that far to begin with, let alone whatever his heightened empathy had brought to the table. Perhaps his empathy granted him the ability to see what people most desired, and used that to his advantage.

Perhaps it granted him the ability to see what they feared, and use *that* to his advantage.

Hannibal couldn't help but imagine, in Will's absence, what life would have been like if they had met before Will was turned. How would they have functioned in each other's presence if it wasn't for Will being supernaturally powerful?

Could Hannibal, perhaps, have gotten the upper hand?

He shuddered to even think. Merely conceptualizing it felt like the greatest sin now.

Would his new God forgive him his sins, or would he punish in ways only the divine can?

…Where *was* his new God?

Hannibal had no patients for the rest of the day. While it was professional to remain in his office during work hours, he couldn't think of a single task he needed to get done that couldn't wait until after he saw Will.

The divine came first. Always.

The hour drive to Wolf Trap felt like nothing to him, his thoughts filled with beautiful sights and blue eyes that pierced like the touch of death.

The beauty of Will's hall in his mind palace was, unfortunately, not the sight he came to behold when he arrived at Will's house.

The dogs were all in the yard, happily ready to greet him, while the front door was wide open. Hannibal approached, mentally hearing Will's voice scolding him for not greeting the dogs, and he stepped inside.

Will was nowhere to be found on this floor.

His car was still in the driveway, yet he was not seen here. Aside from that, the place looked like a complete mess. It had begun to snow outside, and the snow and mud were tracked by wild dog paws all throughout the house.

Hannibal began to wonder how long the front (and back, as it turned out) doors remained open. At last, he decided to try the basement.

He took the steps carefully, not knowing what he was to find down there. Perhaps Will was in a lengthy slumber? Truthfully, Hannibal knew almost nothing about vampiric habits, especially not now that he knew most of the myths were wrong.

When Hannibal reached the bottom of the steps, he was pulled from his thoughts by the most horrible sight.

Will was curled up on the floor beside his coffin, the lid askew, the towel and pillow that were once inside now thrown onto the floor. He clutched his stomach with one hand as if in pain, his face buried in the elbow of his other arm.

And he was sobbing.

Hannibal's first instinct when his heart ached and burned at the sight was to approach. The second he took a step forward, however, Will jolted, sitting upright and pressing his back against the stone.

“Don’t come near me!” he snapped through sobs, still shielding his face with one arm.

Hannibal should have listened, truly. But, of course, he did not.

“What’s wrong, Will?” he asked gently, stepping forward further into the basement.

Will’s face practically contorted, and he covered his nose and mouth.

One could say that the realization hit him like a bus, but it was truly more akin to the biting, scratching sting of barbed wire across his skin.

“You’re hungry,” Hannibal said softly, painfully.

Will did not reply, he simply nodded.

“How long have you gone without feeding, Will?”

Will looked up at him through dark eyelashes that were adorned with tears, glittering like chandeliers. “...Two days.”

The concern that ripped through Hannibal was truly something incredible. Will, who experienced hunger the same way a normal man did, had gone two days without eating. He was clutching his stomach because he was experiencing hunger pains.

And he was tightly grasping his nose to not take in Hannibal’s scent, otherwise he may consume someone he dearly wishes not to.

“Why have you gone so long without eating, Will?”

The look Will gave him could tear a hole through his chest. Hannibal opted to finally listen, stepping back to his original position. That seemed to finally allow Will to relax somewhat, and he removed his hand, wiping his eyes.

“Some…random woman has just been out there taking *pictures* ,” he said at last. “She won’t go away. If I do anything, she’ll get it on camera, and I’m *fucked* .”

Hannibal hoped, with Will’s newfound sensitivity, that he was not able to detect his heightened blood pressure. Someone was stalking Will, coming to his home to do so. They had rendered him so anxious about his discovery that he had opted to starve himself as opposed to risking his existence being leaked to the public.

And it clicked. “...You opened the doors to your home so that the scent of living creatures would leave. Even ones you care about.”

Will looked away, pain lacing his features. So it was true.

Hannibal gazed at him with concern. “I must insist that you allow me to help you, Will.”

“I’ll kill you,” Will said bitterly. It was not a threat, at least it wasn’t intended as one. It was a promise of what was to come if Hannibal offered himself up again.

“Not me, then,” Hannibal offered. “I will return, and I will bring enough with me to sustain you.”

Will shifted. “Hannibal…I can’t let you risk that for me.”

“I’m afraid I’m not giving you a choice,” Hannibal said with a lilt of playfulness in his voice, then began to ascend the stairs.

———

Wolf Trap was, unfortunately, not a very lively town. Hunting was near impossible here, which Hannibal supposed was why Will was still here to begin with. Hunts could not be traced back to him if they were far enough away.

Unless a foolish killer stumbled upon him and got dragged to their demise. Hannibal couldn't help the grin that formed as he remembered the sight.

Hannibal stopped his car when he had found a rather unlucky man whose car had broken down on the side of the road. It had grown dark by then, and Hannibal was not keen on wasting any more time obtaining food for Will. He parked and exited the Bentley with his lights off, approaching.

He did not offer his typical politeness to start with. There was no time. Will was in pain, and he required sustenance *now* .

He grabbed the man, attempting to subdue him with an arm around the neck. With all of Hannibal's strength, it was almost guaranteed to work.

Until four other men began to exit the vehicle.

In the dark, Hannibal had not seen them. He cursed under his breath. This was such a rookie mistake for such an experienced killer.

He did not let go of the man. Hannibal was in a suitable position currently. Surely these other men would not attack if they knew their friend's life was in danger, right?

The knife slashing his arm told him he was very much wrong.

He hissed, letting go and stepping back. This was quite possibly the worst case scenario, other than him being killed immediately. The men were beginning to approach, each yelling whatever particular thing they were angry with about this situation. None of them could be more than 28 years old. Hannibal began to step back, doing his best to analyze the situation as his arm bled through his jacket.

A drop of his blood hit the pavement.

The man furthest back emitted a shrill scream, and vanished just as quickly.

The way the scene was illuminated had the group cast in backlighting, which made it virtually impossible for Hannibal to determine what could have happened to that man.

He had a guess when the second furthest man shrieked and vanished as well. Hannibal did nothing to stop the grin that came to his face.

Cunning boy .

The group was in panic now, the remaining three men attempting to run. One by one, each was picked off, presumably dragged into the woods at inhuman speeds for consumption.

At last, there was silence. Until Hannibal heard the passenger door of his Bentley open.

“Lovely to see you at full strength again, Will,” Hannibal said as sweetly as he could. “Did you follow me on my journey here?”

“Just get in the fucking car,” Will hissed back.

———

The drive back to Will's house was dead silent. Will stared out the window, not so much as looking in Hannibal's direction.

Hannibal glanced at him every now and then (which was approximately every ten seconds), unsatisfied. He had hoped for at least a thanks for his efforts, but it was clear he was not going to get one. For some reason, Will was upset.

As soon as Hannibal pulled into the driveway, Will exited the vehicle, rounding up his dogs back inside as he entered the home. Hannibal followed, albeit in less of a rush.

Hannibal closed the front door as Will closed the back door. Before Hannibal could initiate a conversation, Will disappeared into the bathroom, firmly locking the door.

Will finally returned after about five minutes, his face now completely clean of the blood that had been there before.

He almost did a double take when he saw Hannibal sitting on the edge of the bed, staring up at him with what he could only compare to puppy eyes.

"...What?"

"No thanks for my efforts?"

"Your efforts nearly got you mugged. Or killed."

“I was not aware that they had weaponry.”

“Don’t you typically check for that sort of thing?”

“Do you?”

Will scoffed, not bothering to come up with a more polite response. “You’re not a–...you know.”

Hannibal blinked innocently. “Not a what?”

“Are you always this much of a pain in the ass?”

“Only with those who wish to keep me around.”

Will rolled his eyes, but came to sit beside him regardless. There was a brief silence before Will spoke again.

“...Why did you come?”

“You hadn’t made a peep in days, Will. I was beginning to worry.”

Will huffed softly. “What, now *you* have some supernatural sense?”

“Perhaps I should have instead developed a sense that detected attitude problems.”

Will couldn't keep himself from laughing, swatting at Hannibal's arm. The playful nature missed its mark when Hannibal hissed, pulling his sliced arm away.

Will's eyes widened. "Oh shit– I'm sorry, I forgot– Are you–?"

"I'm fine, Will," Hannibal assured with a soft smile. "Most likely in need of stitches, but I'm fine."

Will considered for a moment, glancing Hannibal over. He was full, but…

"Take off your jacket."

Hannibal, intrigued, did as he was told.

He stared, mesmerized, as Will carefully took his sliced arm in hand, lifting it to his mouth. Will closed his eyes as his lips connected with the wound, and he gave the tiniest suck known to man.

If anything, it was more like a kiss. And it set Hannibal's soul on fire.

Will set his arm down, yet still, he did not smile. Hannibal matched his serious gaze.

"You're upset about tonight's events."

Will nodded, looking away.

"Are you upset because I was in danger, or upset because you had to go after multiple people?"

“Both,” Will answered. “Normally I end up killing them from feeding. This time I just… There were enough that I didn’t have to. I don’t know if I chose right or not, I just couldn’t do it.”

Hannibal tilted his head. “You kept them alive?”

“All of them. If I did it to one, I had to get them all. Otherwise the rest would do something, and I couldn’t let that happen, either.”

“What if they remember my face, Will?”

“How do you expect them to tell the story and be believed? And…I probably made them at least sort of delirious. It happens when you lose blood.”

Hannibal nodded. “Touché. Would you have been able to completely drain five men?”

“Probably not. I max out at one and a half, and that half is pushing it.”

Hannibal hummed in acknowledgement, glancing at the window at the darkness that had consumed the outdoors.

“It’s rather late now.”

Will looked up. “Oh. I guess it is…Are you gonna be able to drive home safely?”

Sent home already? That simply wouldn’t do. Hannibal sighed, turning his arm and wincing.

“I suppose I should be alright. It’s just a minor wound after all. Hopefully I can control the wheel.”

He made eye contact with Will, who was currently looking at him like a disappointed mother.

“Hannibal.”

“Yes?”

“What wound?”

Hannibal appeared confused for a moment, only for realization to wash over him as he checked his arm at last. Will’s kiss had made the wound vanish altogether.

When his eyes met Will’s again, Will was struggling not to laugh. Hannibal felt heat rise to his cheeks, though the feeling of shame was absolutely miniscule.

“I don’t suppose I can talk my way out of that one,” he said, amused with the situation.

“No. No you absolutely cannot,” Will said through laughs. “If you want to stay so badly, ask.”

Hannibal’s gaze was kept on Will’s face as he spoke. He hadn’t seen him in actual joy in… well, had he *ever* seen him happy? He had seen him smugly satisfied, but that was not true happiness the way that this was.

Will’s genuine smile was something that would likely have gotten him slaughtered in ancient times for the jealousy of the gods.

“Will,” Hannibal said at last, his voice soft, almost innocent, hoping to appeal to Will’s darker nature in this submission, “may I stay here with you?”

Will gave a soft smile, bringing his hand up to brush Hannibal’s hair away from his face.

“Of course,” he answered.

Hannibal smiled in return, removing his shoes and moving fully onto the bed. When he was sitting beneath the blanket, he paused, glancing up at Will.

Will only laughed at the hopeful look in his eyes.

“Do you always have this much difficulty asking for things, Hannibal?”

“Will,” Hannibal began, “would you accompany me?”

Will grinned, taking his boots off and making his way under the covers, sitting with his back against the wall. “Only because you asked politely.”

Hannibal scooted over to make room for him. Yet somehow, even with this presence, he still didn’t feel fully satisfied. He glanced at Will, a curious glint in his eyes.

Will grinned back at him, rolling his eyes. “Oh, come here,” he said, wrapping his arms around Hannibal and pulling him in close.

Hannibal had absolutely no complaints, snuggling in and resting his head on Will’s chest. Though he had to admit, he hadn’t been expecting this. Will’s touch now was much softer than ever before, his hands warm from being sated with blood at last.

“It’s almost funny,” Hannibal said with a smile, “I still somehow expected a heartbeat.”

“Sorry to disappoint.”

“You could not possibly disappoint me.”

Will laughed softly, running his fingers through Hannibal’s hair. It took all of two minutes of the action before Hannibal found himself fighting to keep his eyes open.

He fought one final time. “Will?”

“Yeah?”

“Are you…fully satisfied?”

“Hannibal. I’m not feeding on you when you’re half asleep.”

“It would wake me up nicely.”

Despite his previous confidence, Hannibal could not help the quiet gasp he emitted when Will placed a gentle kiss on his head.

“Absolutely not. Go to sleep.

Hannibal’s heart was practically soaring. He had imagined Will had kept him in his affections by now, but even so, he could not predict the extent to which that reached. Granted, one would typically assume such small gestures would come *prior* to consuming the other person’s blood, but Hannibal was never one for the ordinary anyways, and thus he did not complain. It was unfortunate that he was too exhausted now to return such a gesture. He

would prefer a time when he could make it worthwhile, and have it stored in Will's memory palace for years to come.

Hannibal hummed contently, closing his eyes at last to drift off into what he imagined would be one of the most peaceful rests he'd had in quite some time.

Just before he did so, he could have sworn he saw a brief flash outside, as if from a camera. He was far too tired to think much about it before sleep came crashing over him.

———

The events of the previous night weighed heavily on Hannibal's mind. It was impossible not to think about the sensation of Will's arms pulling him down, the feeling of Will's chest as he used it as a pillow

But it was far more difficult to get his mind off of the flash outside.

He was a fool for falling asleep then. Will had ensured it was rather difficult to control, but he was a fool nonetheless. He could only hope that Will hadn't seen it. The thought that Will neglected to rectify the issue solely because Hannibal had fallen asleep on him was almost too much to bear.

Hannibal, fortunately for his sanity, was pulled from his thoughts by a knock on his office door. He placed down the pen he had failed to write with at his desk, standing up and adjusting his suit before making his way to the door.

He opened it, and kept his face neutral despite his rising disgust.

The woman smiled, her fiery hair working only to brighten her piercing eyes.

“Dr. Lecter, hi,” she said with all the feigned politeness in the world. “I believe I had an appointment scheduled?”

“I believe you had,” he said, matching her attitude. “Please, come in.”

He stepped to the side, allowing her to enter. His cover almost broke immediately as he took in her scent.

Grass. Wood. Wet dog.

He shut the door.

He should have known it was her.

“I need to ask what this is about, Miss Lounds.”

Freddie blinked, looking at him in mild surprise, then laughed.

“Oh, goodness, that’s…embarrassing!” she lied. “I suppose I wasn’t aware of my own popularity.”

“Nor I your capacity for deception, Miss Lounds,” Hannibal said all too calmly.

She tilted her head. “Deception, Dr. Lecter?”

“You did not book this appointment under your real name. Given the material you report on, I find myself wondering who you plan on attempting to fool me into incriminating.”

“Incriminating?” she asked with feigned innocence. “No, no. I just need to verify what I already know.”

“Verify, Miss Lounds?”

“Yes.”

She offered no further explanation. Hannibal offered no further conversation. He allowed the silence to fall between them. Neither wanted to be the first to speak, hoping to prompt the other to continue.

Freddie huffed when it didn’t work.

“There was an FBI profiler who was thought to have disappeared,” she began at last. “Miraculously, nobody seemed to put any effort into trying to find him. Quite odd, don’t you think?”

“You suspect foul play, Miss Lounds?”

“I suspect he never went missing.”

“What makes you suspect that?”

“Because you were seen returning to town with him.”

Hannibal’s jaw set. She very explicitly did not mention stalking *Will’s* home. “May I ask why you were watching my home, Miss Lounds?”

“Freddie is fine,” she said, slightly agitated but attempting to mask it. She was not as well versed in such an art as Hannibal was. “A renowned psychiatrist goes missing, and of all people to put up the missing posters, it was Dr. Alana Bloom who led the search.”

“She was concerned for my well-being. I see no harm in that.”

“She knows Will Graham, Dr. Lecter.”

“Do you have a point, Miss Lounds– my apologies, *Freddie* – or is this conversation going to consist entirely of short, unimportant questions until you finally feel you somehow managed to glean some sort of admission from the answers I provide?”

Her posture straightened, pulling her shoulders back.

“Dr. Lecter,” she began carefully, “are you aware of Will Graham’s role in covering up the disappearance of Garett Jacob Hobbs?”

“Yes.”

The surprise that came over her face was truly something to behold.

Truthfully, Hannibal was unaware of the specifics of the case. But he knew the case generally. The Minnesota Shrike, the press had called him. Murdered his wife and daughter, along with about seven other young women.

The profile would match up to who could change Will.

“Then you know what he is.”

“Yes.”

“And you know of the FBI’s conscious and intentional covering up of the existence of *vampires* , Dr. Lecter?”

“Yes.”

“And you’ve done nothing about this?”

“Evidently not.”

She seemed baffled, as though she couldn’t figure out why he would ever be admitting to knowing such things. Surely, she had not done enough research. If she had, she would know that not only would she look insane trying to publish such an article as this, but she would be hunted almost immediately.

Instead of having the decency to back off, she smiled.

Her hand came out of her bag, pressing the ‘stop’ button on her recording.

“Thank you, Dr. Lecter,” she said sweetly. “That will be all.”

Hannibal’s eyes, without Freddie seeming to notice, showed something dark.

“What do you intend to do with such a recording, Freddie?”

“Write an article, obviously,” she said proudly.

“With the goal being?”

“To expose the FBI coverup.”

“And Will Graham in the process?”

“Of course.”

“Why?”

“Why not?” she asked with a smile. “I don’t know about you, but if I were the average person in the state, I would want to know.”

“You want to cause a panic?”

“I want to reveal the *truth* .”

“You wish for a witch hunt, Miss Lounds.”

She grinned. “A *vampire* hunt, Dr. Lecter.”

“Why?”

“For the safety of everyone on this side of the country,” she said as though he were a fool for asking.

He hummed softly. "For someone who claims to want to expose every killer in the area, you have a tendency to turn your vigilantism into killing."

Her grin faded. "I am not a vigilante. I'm a journalist."

"The pen is mightier than the sword," he countered. "You are fully aware of the impact your words will have, and yet you insist you take none of the blame for their effects. You are either one of the most clever journalists I have ever encountered, or the most foolish."

She stiffened slightly, putting on as elegant of a mask as she could muster.

“I believe we’re done here, Dr. Lecter. Thank you for your time,” she said simply, beginning to make her way to the door.

On her way to put Will in danger, for nothing but personal gratification.

She had stalked them both. She was here because she saw them together. She was here because Hannibal had been in Will's home, and she *knew* .

Hannibal could feel almost every muscle in his body tense, the veins in his neck throbbing. His heart was practically pounding now. Oh how he imagined Will would relish the sight.

But not now. Hannibal was too far gone now to partake in such delightful thoughts. Hannibal was successfully provoked. Hannibal was disgusted. Hannibal was *furious* .

Will was going to eat today.

Freddie looked all too confident until she had an arm around her neck. This time, there was nobody to stop him.

He yanked her entire body back toward the center of the office, keeping an iron grip around her throat. She gasped and panicked, clawing and kicking as much as she could.

He held her there, waiting. Waiting until the fight would leave her. Waiting until she would emit her last gasp. Waiting until–

“Hannibal.”

He looked across the room, his fury leaving him.

“Put her down.”

Hannibal glanced at her for a second, then back at Will.

“She is dangerous to keep alive, Will. She was the one outside of your home.”

“Hannibal,” Will repeated, slower. Dangerously. “I said put her down.”

Hannibal let out a low, disappointed hiss. He dropped her.

Freddie hit the ground hard, coughing and gasping, holding her throat as if it could help hold it open.

Hannibal kept his eyes on Will, noting everything he could. His agitated stance. The harsh way he kept his eyes on Freddie’s weakened body. The all-too familiar look of his nostrils flaring, taking in the scent of life in the room. Of blood coursing through veins.

Hannibal reached for his collar. Will finally looked up, motioning for him to stop.

“Will,” Hannibal began, swallowing. “You must be hungry. You should eat.”

“I know,” Will replied, as though it were the most obvious thing in the world. “And I will.”

And he reached for Freddie.

Hannibal’s eyes widened as he saw Will lift her with a single hand, sinking his teeth into the side of her throat, quieting her screams.

He could feel his chest burning at the sight. The way Will gripped her. The way his teeth looked against her flesh. The newfound life in his eyes. The aggressive way he drained her of her blood. Hannibal finally had to look away.

He would drink from her, but not from Hannibal?

He heard the thud of the body against the ground, his jaw clenching slightly. At least Will did not leave her alive. Hannibal didn’t know what he would do if Will had. Will had only kept the others alive out of necessity. If he did so today, it would mean more than that. If Will had implied that she and Hannibal were on equal footing, Hannibal couldn’t imagine that whatever he felt would be known across the human spectrum of emotion.

At last, Will approached. Only then did Hannibal meet his gaze.

“Is it different?”

“What?”

“Does it taste different?” Hannibal asked, his voice laced with hidden venom. “When they are afraid, does it taste different?”

Will thought for a moment, then replied, “Yes. Anything in the blood makes it taste different. Adrenaline included.”

Endorphins included.

They stayed like that for a moment, until Hannibal reached for the handkerchief in his pocket, holding it in one hand.

“May I?”

Will nodded.

Hannibal held the back of Will’s head in one hand, using the handkerchief to wipe the remnants of Freddie Lounds’ blood from Will’s mouth.

Finally, Will put a hand on Hannibal’s shoulder, and he stopped.

“Will?”

“Hannibal,” Will said, meeting his eyes once more, “I can appreciate your judgment. But I need you to do something for me.”

“Anything.”

“Don’t hunt for me unless I ask you to.”

Hannibal blinked. His expression must have noted his blend of confusion and concern, nearly to the point of seeming hurt, because Will seemed prompted to continue.

“I can’t have you risking yourself for me. If anyone found her in here, you’d be absolutely fucked.”

Hannibal hummed softly, almost amused, almost offended. “I assure you, I can hide a body just fine.”

Will huffed. “Prove it.”

With that, he turned, stepping over Freddie’s corpse and heading swiftly out the door.

Hannibal’s gaze followed after, then slowly settled on the body on his office floor.

He brought the handkerchief to his mouth, stealing a taste.

A final assurance, something to ease his envious mind, that they were not on equal footing, and never would be.

Chapter End Notes

i promise next chapter will be a bit more eventful, and a lot less vague about targets

Dinner and a Show

Chapter Summary

In the aftermath of Freddie's death, Hannibal wonders what pushes Will to kill, and offers someone up with unexpected results.

Chapter Notes

at long last, chapter 4! i had to rewrite entire sections of this to feel like it did just about anything, and if i look at my own writing for too long, it inherently sounds cringey. for the icing on the cake, this part wasn't beta read.

warning: i prefer my Dr. Frederick Chilton as pathetic as possible.

enjoy! :]

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The office was silent now.

It was an odd juxtaposition, the peace and quiet of the room today versus the muffled screams of the evening prior. If he was less keen on maintaining some shred of dignity, one might even say that the feeling of noticing the contrast was almost akin to feeling giddy. To be the only one to know what took place here, and to know what became of Miss Lounds, and to see the feral look in Will’s eyes as he drained her of her life. It was not something anyone else would know.

Yet.

Hannibal had no plans for exposing dear Will, considering the position that would put them both in, but he couldn’t imagine Will enjoyed keeping to the shadows like he had been. It wasn’t sustainable, that isolation. Whether Will would outwardly say that it affected him or not, Hannibal was sure that it did. A man who was asocial by choice, now asocial by force.

The only thing he could think of that had made the event difficult for him to deal with personally was the knowledge that Freddie Lounds could no longer be made into a dish. The blood had been completely drained from her, and thus the meat would have none in it. Any meal made from her would have been a dry mess, and he couldn't even fathom disrespecting Will by feeding that to him. It would be an insult, especially after Will made it very clear that his meals require human blood.

Hannibal would need another body to feed him.

His thoughts were interrupted by his phone ringing. The caller ID nearly made him scowl, but he fixed his expression and cleared his throat before picking up the phone.

Before he could get a word in:

"Hannibal! Oh, thank god. I didn't know what happened to you, I didn't hear anything from you! What the hell happened?"

Hannibal took a deep breath, gathering his thoughts.

"A hello would have sufficed, Alana," he began. "As much as I can appreciate your concern for me, I fear that this borders on a lack of faith in me."

Momentary silence. "...What?"

"I distinctly remember assuring you that all would be well. You seem to have not believed me, Alana."

"It's not that I didn't wanna believe you, it's just…God, you never know with him. Are you alright?"

"So it is Will you do not trust, then."

She huffed on the other end of the line. “No, I don’t trust him anymore. You wouldn’t either, if you had any sense.”

He had to suppress the urge to laugh. Alana Bloom, of all people, telling him not to trust Will? She seemed to be completely unaware that he would come to find out about the role she had to play before he and Will met.

“Does this distrust have to do with what he has become, or does it simply have to do with him no longer being obedient to you?”

Now she sounded truly shocked, bordering on offended. “Excuse me?”

“You attempted to show him to a psychiatrist. They did not mesh well, and you deemed him completely uncooperative as a result. Is this not true?”

There was silence on the other end. For a moment, Hannibal wondered if Alana may just hang up on him. Knowing her tendency for incredulity, it wouldn’t shock him.

“I tried to help him,” she practically spat. “Dr. Chilton could’ve helped him, but he didn’t want it. What was I supposed to think?”

If only she could see the look on his face now. “You attempted to set him up with Dr. Chilton? The situation is worse than I thought.”

“ *Hannibal* .”

“I am not joking, Dr. Bloom. You know just as well as I do that a patient and psychiatrist need to have a certain degree of similarities in order to work well together. I don’t think I could name a less compatible pair if I tried.”

Momentary silence, only broken by her deep breath. “You really think it was that bad of an idea?”

“Your assertiveness can be a virtue, Alana. But it can also become your enemy if you neglect the other party’s needs. You neglected Will’s needs when you insisted he should see a psychiatrist of your choosing as opposed to one he felt more comfortable with. You crossed a line with him, Alana. His straying from psychiatric help afterward is not solely his fault. You are a skilled psychiatrist, I assure you, but you need to admit to yourself when you have not done your best for someone.”

She seemed to be considering it for a moment, but then, “Why are you saying this to me, Hannibal? Why are you inserting yourself into his life so much? That’s dangerous, even if you don’t know it yet.”

“I am not inserting myself into his life, Alana. He has invited me in, and he has been a rather gracious host. I’m sorry you could not carry on your friendship long enough to see it.”

“Hannibal–”

“As much as I can enjoy an impromptu session, Alana, I do have patients to attend to. Mind who you decide becomes your patient without a proper appointment. Good day, Alana.”

He hung up, placing the phone on his desk.

Typically, he would not have cut someone off in such a way. But truth be told, he wasn’t sure how long he would be able to handle being lectured, especially by someone who had treated Will the way that Alana had. Will may have been able to see her reasoning for why she behaved the way that she did, but with this newfound information, Hannibal was not obligated to pretend that her actions didn’t irk him.

Though he had to admit, it was rather odd that someone like Alana had made such a decision to begin with. She wasn’t exactly one for irrational thinking. So what on Earth would cause her to go down such a path? Why was she so desperate for quick results?

Hannibal leaned back in his seat, closing his eyes as he scoured the halls of his memory palace…

"I got too close. My supervisor got into the most trouble you can get into without getting fired."

"Why is that?"

"Because he was specifically warned not to let me get too close."

"An odd conspiracy, the FBI knowing about the existence of vampires…What was your role?"

"Profiler. Hyperempathy helped with that."

"Did it?"

"I could get into their headspace. Feel what they felt."

"Did this bother you?"

"Oh absolutely. Everyone used to think I was some kind of monster for it. Now I really am one. You reap what you sow, I guess."

Hannibal opened his eyes.

He hadn't thought nearly long enough about what Will had confessed to him that day. Truthfully, Hannibal had only been thinking about what Will was like nowadays. When he had thought about Will during his time of profiling, he imagined far more mundane things for him, with his new life being more exciting.

But could it be, God let him imagine, that Will had been capable of killing since he'd first begun empathizing with killers?

It was…dangerous. Dangerous to start going down this road, to attempt to pry beneath the floorboards of the home Will had so graciously invited him into, to search every nook and cranny of the mind of a man who was far more than a man, and who could tear Hannibal apart without so much as blinking if he so desired.

But where would faith be without temptations?

——

Hannibal looked in the mirror, straightening his bow tie.

Breathing in, he noticed a change in the scent of the air, and he smiled.

"I was not expecting you this evening," he said, keeping his eyes on the mirror. "I suppose this bit of lore is true?"

"I suppose it is," Will said behind him, his tone playful, "when I want it to be."

The thought sent a chill up Hannibal's spine that he fought not to show. The idea of Will sneaking around undetected because he could somehow toggle between showing himself in mirrors and remaining invisible–

“I mean, I see myself in them. But other people don’t.”

The fantasy subsided. “Oh.”

“How did you think I washed the blood off my face the night you stayed over?”

A smile found its way to Hannibal’s lips again. *Damn this man* . “I admit, I had forgotten you washed it off.”

“What, because you wish I didn’t?”

Before Hannibal could grace such a line with a response, Will spoke again: “Where are you off to? Tux and everything…”

“I am headed to the opera tonight, I must dress accordingly.”

“...Alone?”

Hannibal took a breath. “I was going to extend an invitation to you, but I’m afraid I have no method of contacting you aside from showing up to your house uninvited. While the last time happened to be for the best, I still find it’s rather rude to do so.”

Hannibal turned around only when he noticed a prolonged silence, and was met by Will wearing a confused expression.

“Will?”

“I…do that all the time. Here, I mean. I’ve done it before. You didn’t say anything.”

Hannibal huffed a laugh. “I did not intend to imply that it is rude when you do so, Will. I knew what I was getting myself into when I invited you in.”

“Alana doesn’t seem to think so.”

“No, she does not.”

“You hear from her at all?

“Yes,” Hannibal replied, adjusting his cufflinks. “She called me earlier.”

It was Will’s turn to huff a laugh. “Not fond of our relationship, is she?”

Relationship .

Hannibal took a breath.

“No, she is not. And I imagine she would be furious to know I’ve invited you with me tonight.”

Will grinned. “Is that an invitation or a reason why you didn’t invite me already?”

“Will.”

He laughed, showing off those beautiful teeth, fangs currently retracted. “You know I’m kidding. But I, uh…I don’t have anything fancy.”

“Here, or at your home?”

Will tilted his head slightly, matching Hannibal’s typical behavior. Hannibal’s heart soared at the sight.

“Would you wait for me?”

“I suppose that depends on how long. It begins in an hour.”

“And you’re ready *now* ?”

“I must prepare for traffic, though I imagine you will not face the same issue. That is, if you are willing to show your face in such a public area.”

Will laughed, shaking his head. “Not the sort of crowd that would know my face.”

Hannibal smiled, turning back to the mirror to adjust his collar. “Shall I see you there, then?”

Silence.

Hannibal turned around, and Will was no longer there. He would have to suppose that the conversation was confirmation enough.

———

Hannibal had been, admittedly, slightly disappointed to have to make the drive alone. Some part of him had hoped he could still venture there with Will in the passenger seat, discussing the opera they were about to see.

He supposed he would have to adjust to this way of courting a being such as Will Graham.

He had not yet taken his first step through the door when he felt an arm loop around him at the elbow, a hand carefully placing itself on his bicep.

“I didn’t scare you, did I?” Will said beside him.

“Not at all,” Hannibal said, smiling at him, taking in the sight of Will in a tux and storing it deep inside his memory palace. “I’m afraid I do not find you so terrifying now.”

Will rolled his eyes, but stepped through the doors with him.

“What are we seeing, exactly?”

“ *Il Giustino* , composed by Antonio Vivaldi.”

“Vivaldi…sounds vaguely familiar.”

“I’m sure you’ve heard the name somewhere. He’s rather popular in classical music, and the more famous composers end up with their names in all sorts of places.”

“Yeah, that’d explain it.”

Suddenly, Will paused. “Wait– Seating–”

“I already purchased two tickets, Will. There is a seat reserved for you.”

Will looked at him, seeming both stunned and flattered. “You saved me a seat? What happened to not expecting me this evening?”

“I was sure you would pop up sometime before the opera.”

“What if I said no?”

“The purchase was my idea, and thus the consequence would be mine to bear alone.”

Will rolled his eyes. “God, don’t do stuff like that. I can’t be constantly thinking in the back of my mind that you’ve shilled money out on something for me.”

Hannibal tilted his head, amused. “Another rule?”

“Stop it.”

Neither could hide their amusement as they made their way to their designated seats, arm in arm.

———

To Hannibal’s delight, Will had actually seemed to enjoy himself.

This had to be his first time at a venue like this. He seemed amazed by everything on stage, reacting accordingly, though he remained silent out of respect the way the rest of the audience did. Hannibal was almost certain he saw Will become teary-eyed when *"Vedrò con mio diletto"* was performed, though he knew better than to bring it up.

Will exited the booth, still hanging onto Hannibal's arm as they made their exit. Hannibal was all prepared for the lovely ride home they would have to make up for the company missed earlier.

Suddenly, Will let go. When Hannibal turned to figure out why, Will was gone.

Hannibal looked around, unable to find where the little menace had gone off to, when he saw a horrifically familiar face that Will was sure to have noticed.

"Dr. Lecter," Chilton chided on his way over, "I must admit this is quite the surprise."

"You should not find it so, I find myself here at every opportunity," Hannibal replied with a polite smile.

It was fortunate that Hannibal knew how to perfectly mask just how badly he wanted to gouge the man's eyes out right then and there. He didn't know the specifics of what offense the man had committed against Will, but he knew enough to know that Chilton had severely misstepped. And that was on top of his general dislike of the man.

"Well I must say it's certainly been a while. You had Dr. Bloom running mad," Chilton said with an amused lilt to his voice as he so often had. "Not even the most prolific patients have had that effect. Tell me, what did you do?"

Hannibal kept a polite smile. "I would love to talk about it over dinner. I'm afraid I already have such plans, though I'm sure my guest would not mind a third."

Chilton cocked his head slightly, playfully reproachful. “I’m not interrupting a date, am I?”

“I assure you, Frederick,” Hannibal replied, “you could not interrupt us if you tried.”

———

“This smells absolutely delightful.”

Hannibal gave another polite smile over the table. He was having to dole out a lot of those tonight, specifically to this pain in the ass across the table.

“I shall hope it tastes just as good,” he offered.

“I must ask, didn’t you mention a third party at the table? I see you’ve left a plate.”

“He is running late,” Hannibal said. Truthfully, he had no idea when Will would show up. Maybe not until long after Chilton was gone.

Chilton cut into the pork meal– which was, unfortunately, actual pork.

Hannibal could think of two ways this evening would go as a result: The first, Will was off hunting, and would not end up hungry this evening. The second, Will would be hunting when he arrived.

Hannibal did not know the extent to which his hatred for Chilton dug, but even if it was for nothing but entertainment's sake, he wondered if it was enough to end the man's life. But Will had given one simple request, and that was to not hunt for him unless he had asked. While Hannibal could very much venture into the realm of making his own decisions on such matters to see what would transpire as a result, he found the request easy enough to follow,

especially if it meant maintaining Will's trust. Thus, whether or not Frederick Chilton died that night would be entirely in Will's hands. Hannibal was simply offering the opportunity.

Though, truth be told, more than just the meal itself lingered in the back of Hannibal's mind. Hannibal was used to cooking, used to preparing meals to his heart's content and absolutely flooring his guests with how fantastic his dishes tasted. But this was something he could not control.

Hannibal did not know how to flavor blood.

Will mentioned blood tasting different depending on what was in it. Hannibal didn't know what that meant in terms of which sort of flavor Will preferred.

Adrenaline tasted different. Endorphins would taste different, too, then. Certain food intake tasted different, based on what Will had told him. Hannibal knew that fear made meat taste worse, but did fear make blood taste better? Did a vegan diet?

Did Freddie Lounds taste better than him? Is that why Will refused his blood?

The sound of shattering glass echoed throughout the room, and Hannibal hissed in pain.

He had not been aware of how harshly he was gripping his wine glass, admittedly. He had clenched it to the point of breaking, it would seem. Typically Hannibal was much better at masking such aggression around his guests, but the thoughts running through his mind were just so… *vile* .

"Oh, god–" Chilton said across the table, flinching at the glass shattering. "Are you…Are you alright, Dr. Lecter?"

"Quite fine," Hannibal lied, checking his hand. "Just some glass stuck, nothing I cannot remove."

“Are you sure you should do that on your own? I know you were a surgeon, but do you need…”

Chilton trailed off, his eyes widening in horror. Hannibal looked up at him, confused, but noticed that Chilton was not looking at him. He was looking over Hannibal’s shoulder, into the doorway.

A hand was gently placed on Hannibal’s shoulder, and he smiled.

“So glad you could join us, Will.”

“Sorry I’m late,” Will said casually, walking around and sitting at the head of the table, directly between Hannibal and Chilton. He was still in his tux from earlier, much to Hannibal's delight. “I see I missed some of the action.”

“An accident,” Hannibal said, “nothing to worry too much about.”

Will nodded, accepting the minimal answer. He turned to Chilton, smiling in a way that Hannibal wasn’t sure he’d seen before.

“Well hello again,” Will began, almost cooing at the shaking man. “How long’s it been?”

“F–few months,” Chilton got out, forcing a fake smile through his terrified shuddering. “H–how do you and…you and Dr. Lecter…?”

“Oh, we’re friends,” Will said with a grin. “We’re friends, right, Dr. Lecter?”

“Of course,” Hannibal answered immediately. Though, admittedly, he wasn’t sure what game Will was playing right now. But with just how mocking Will’s tone was, there had to be some

sort of game at play here. He would go along as much as he could.

"I'm shocked you even remember us meeting, Frederick," Will said, beginning to slice into the pork on the plate Hannibal had set out for him. Intriguing, since he wouldn't actually be eating it, according to what Will had told him. "Everything about you on that day was just so…How do I put it? You were just so… *Arrogant* . Secure. Self-assured."

Chilton swallowed hard. "W–was I really?"

"Oh, yeah!" Will said, laughing. "It was really funny, considering how undeserved it is. Oh, hang on–" Will put the fork and knife down, turning to Hannibal. He reached over, taking Hannibal's newly injured hand. "You don't mind if I help out, do you?"

Hannibal grinned. "Not at all, Will."

Will smiled back, carefully picking the few pieces of glass out of Hannibal's hand. Hannibal did his best to keep his expression neutral, but even he had to admit it was damn difficult to do so. Thankfully, there were only about three pieces, each one now resting on the table, coated in Hannibal's blood.

Will brought Hannibal's hand to his face, keeping eye contact as he just barely sucked at the wound. Hannibal's breath hitched, but he didn't dare break the eye contact that was established, even as his hand was placed back on the table, the wound beginning to heal.

Will was the first to break the gaze, turning to Chilton with a smile. Admittedly, Hannibal nearly forgot he was there to begin with.

"I know Alana filled you in," Will said, tilting his head. "What did she tell you, Freddy?"

Chilton looked like he was on the verge of passing out. "She…She told me that…after you left my office…y–you had a case…"

“A case? That’s all you’re calling it?”

“What do you want me to say?” Chilton suddenly snapped with newfound energy, though he sounded even more terrified. “That you were hunting down a *vampire* ? That you *became* one? Is it not enough to feel insane in your presence? You want to hear me say it?”

“Say it? Say what?”

Chilton looked at him with complete incredulity. “...You…sadistic beast–”

Faster than either of the other men could react, Will was standing upright, grabbing Chilton’s collar in an iron grip. “Say that again. I *dare* you to repeat that.”

Like the true coward he was, Chilton was crying now. “Please– I–I’m sorry– What do you want from me?”

Will pulled, beginning to lift Chilton to his feet, only to dangle him just high enough that he was left scrambling on his toes. “You wanna know what I want from you, Frederick? What I want to hear?”

Chilton nodded, fearfully gripping onto the arm that was holding him, the tips of his shoes skidding across the wood as his host just stared at the scene in awe.

Will pulled him close, leaning to his ear. “I want to know…why you convinced a random murderer that he was The Chesapeake Ripper. You and I’s tastes may differ, but personally, I think that would make *you* the sadistic beast here.”

Hannibal’s gaze shifted between the two as he registered Will's goal. Chilton was not a meal for Will, but a potential future one for Hannibal. An interesting turn of events, if not a *gift* . A gift in exchange for this gift. Will got to turn things around on the man whose insufferable

ego had made his mortal life more difficult, and in return, Hannibal got to know just what Chilton was doing behind the scenes with his hard work, handing credit to someone undeserving, and could later do something about it.

Chilton had begun trying to sputter excuses, which were only vaguely decipherable through his blubbering tears. Will, annoyed, just wanted him to *shut up already* . At least, when it came trying to bullshit his way out of this. He pulled Chilton closer, just barely grazing a fang off of his neck.

If Chilton was losing his mind before, he was inconsolable now. He screamed the second he felt the fang, regardless of the fact that it didn't even begin to pierce the skin. He blubbered apologies, begging to be let go, and finally, begging for Hannibal to help.

He could not have been more stunned, however, than when he finally realized that Hannibal was not only doing absolutely nothing, but was grinning at the sight.

Finally, caught on to this betrayal (if one could even call it that), Chilton began kicking and thrashing with a brand new confidence.

"You– You *bastard* ! You brought me to him! You knew!"

"I do not know what he will do tonight, Frederick," Hannibal said with all the nonchalance in the world, "but whatever his decision may be, I'm sure the world will see some degree of justice in the end."

At once, the fight left him. Chilton dangled there, sobbing miserably in Will's grip, knowing now that he couldn't escape this if he tried.

Just then, Will put him down.

Will just grinned at Chilton's puzzled face, dusting off his suit and adjusting his tie.

“There. Nothing happened. All better? You can go.”

The menacing, mocking in his tone was enough to slaughter any man’s ego. Chilton looked at him, confused and defeated. “I… *what* ?”

“You can go,” Will repeated. “I trust you won’t cause anyone the sort of trouble you usually do?”

Chilton looked between the two, shocked, before suddenly dropping to his knees, gripping onto Will's slacks.

"Thank you– Thank you, I…I'll do anything, thank you for sparing m–"

"Frederick. *Get off me* ."

Chilton let go, standing, adjusting his suit jacket.

"Right…right." He wiped the tears from his face, realizing just how pathetic he must have looked. The two men in front of him were grinning, like he had just put on the most entertaining show they had ever seen. The humiliation that swept over him was nearly burning, and without so much as thanking Hannibal for the meal, he left as swiftly as he could.

Will stepped out of the dining room, as if to check to ensure Chilton was gone.

Hannibal finished his meal in peace.

———

Hannibal rose from the table, meeting Will in the foyer.

“You didn’t come back to the table,” he pointed out.

“Nothing for me to eat there.”

Hannibal gazed at Will’s back, who was still a solid five feet in front of him. “...I was there.”

Will huffed a laugh, turning around. “Yeah, I guess you were.”

“Terribly sorry that I couldn’t provide more for you tonight. I didn’t have the materials.”

“You don’t have to apologize, Hannibal. It’s your table.”

Hannibal wet his lips, pressing them into a line momentarily. “Are you hungry, Will?”

Will glanced him up and down, pausing for a moment, then finally nodded. “But you knew that, didn’t you?”

“What do you mean?”

Will stepped forward, his eyes much darker now. “You knew I would be. That’s why you dragged Frederick here. Only you were hoping I wouldn’t kill him, weren’t you? You prefer when my *prey* is killed and cooked by *you* .”

Hannibal was suddenly aware of just how much his space had decreased, with Will much closer to him. “Will?”

“You *hated* watching me kill Freddie Lounds. I saw the look on your face. You wanted to be her then, didn’t you? You even offered yourself to me. And tonight, conveniently, you were wounded before I got to Chilton.”

Hannibal swallowed hard. “It was an accident, Will.”

“Then do tell me what happened.”

Hannibal stared into his eyes, trying to piece together what emotion was found there. Somehow, Will did not seem angry. Despite his words, and despite his tone, he was not angry. Which would mean he was pointing all of this out for the thrill of it. Goading him on, as it were.

“...Which of us tasted better, Will?”

“Elaborate.”

“Adrenaline or endorphins. Vegan diet or meat diet. Which tasted better?”

Will was directly in front of him now, his expression indecipherable.

“Diet doesn’t matter all that much, food’s food. But if you must know…”

Will suddenly grabbed him by the throat, though no pressure was placed on his airway. Will pulled him closer, leaning to his ear.

“...endorphins taste better.”

It took all of the force in his body for Hannibal's knees not to buckle then and there. He reached up, beginning to undo his bowtie.

Will watched, releasing his grip and grinning. "Good."

Hannibal placed the undone tie on the decorative table behind him, beginning to undo his jacket buttons next.

Will's hands caressing his face and neck were a horrible distraction. "Imagine. An apex predator who likes being hunted. Do you like it that much when I bite you? So much that you'll create a situation just for me to do it? Can't just use your words?"

Hannibal was rushing to try and get his jacket off, but the sound of Will's voice taunting him was becoming too much to bear.

"You wanna ask for it so bad. I can tell. I always can. You did the first couple times, remember? Go on. Ask me to bite you. Ask me to make you feel your entire circulatory system bracing itself against me. Ask me to suck on every major artery you have. Go on, you needy little thing, ask me *politely* ."

The jacket hit the floor. "Will, please…"

"Please what?"

" *Feed* . Feed on me to your heart's content."

Will yanked him closer, sinking his teeth into his neck without another word. Hannibal let out some gruff loud noise, gripping onto him, pulling him closer.

Then Will grabbed him, shoving him to the side, down a hall. "Get rid of the rest of it."

Hannibal fumbled with his dress shirt, his mind still reeling from the first bite. He managed to get a few buttons undone himself before Will's hands were on him again.

"Too slow," Will cooed into his ear before buttons were flying across the space in front of them, with Will starting to rip the shirt off so fast that part of the fabric tore.

Hannibal wasn't ashamed of the way he cried out when Will's fangs sunk into his neck again. Much less the noises he emitted when Will released him, only to bite at his shoulder, and his clavicle, and his chest.

His belt was the next thing to go, thanks to Will, and he managed to get the front bits of his slacks undone in time for Will's liking. Will sank down and ripped the pants down so quickly that Hannibal nearly fell over. When he made the mistake of bracing himself on Will, Will pulled him down to the floor with him, and any remaining clothing on Hannibal's body was gone.

Hannibal's nude body felt horribly cold against the wooden floor, only to be warmed again by the sensation of Will's fangs penetrating his skin, and the gentle pull of his blood being suctioned through veins and arteries. He tried to keep his pleas to a minimum, knowing he would hurt his voice quickly as Will bit down from his chest to his lower stomach. He couldn't hold down a particular cry when Will's teeth sunk into the front part of his hip, where veins were on full display through his skin.

It was then that Hannibal realized he was likely to lose his voice tonight.

He managed to snake his fingers through Will's hair, hoping to encourage him to stay there, but upon touching him, Will sat up and grabbed Hannibal's hand, biting a row down his forearm. Hannibal gasped, allowing him to continue, evening turning his arm to present the thick vein on his outer wrist. Will finally bit into Hannibal's inner elbow, which made him emit a loud hiss, prompting Will to let go and kiss the spot instead, healing that specific bite.

The gesture of fixing such a thing was so caring that it was overwhelming. As if Hannibal needed another reason to feel vulnerable in the moment, his eyes began welling with tears. Will remained kneeling over him, now cupping either side of his face.

“You’re doing good. You’re doing so good. You okay, baby? Got any more to give me?”

Hannibal held onto Will’s wrists, gazing into his eyes. “More…So much more…Please, Will, do more–”

Will grinned at him, and swooped down to make this side of Hannibal’s neck match the other, delighting in the sound it made the man produce.

Will continued, savagely ensuring that the entire right side of Hannibal’s upper body matched the left. There were bite marks all over him, each with an ooze of blood coming from four particularly deep indents.

At last, Will sank down further, lifting one of Hannibal’s legs. When Will sank his teeth into the area of his femoral artery, Hannibal let out a particularly guttural cry, his head nearly hitting against the floor as his eyes rolled back, attempting to grip at the floor with no grip to be had. While Will couldn’t linger on this area for too long in fear of draining too much blood, he was generous enough to leave several bites there, and to make the other thigh match.

Hannibal was breathing heavily beneath him, tears still in his eyes that threatened to pool over, though Will was assured now that those were simply from the endorphin rush. He was hardly able to focus on anything except the sensation of fangs slipping in and out of his skin, in and out of his arteries, and feather-light sucks at each new wound.

Suddenly, Will flipped him over, climbing over him and sinking his teeth into Hannibal’s shoulder blade, then trailed bites across his back to match the front of him.

Hannibal was writhing beneath him in a flurry of grunts and moans, trying desperately to grip the floor in front of him, but unable to find any purchase.

Will rose suddenly, reaching over and pressing down on the back of Hannibal’s neck, pushing the side of his face into the bloody floor.

“Stay still,” he commanded.

Hannibal did as he was told, feeling as Will brought his hands behind his back, holding them there with a single hand around his wrists. He held him there for a moment, then let go, moving down to get to work.

As soon as Will’s teeth sank into Hannibal’s lower back, his entire body shifted, and, of course, he moved his hands. He could hear Will laugh softly behind him, which burned his face a delicious shade of red as he sheepishly put his wrists back where he had been instructed.

Momentary silence. For a second, Hannibal wondered what Will was doing, unable to see from this angle, until he felt the smooth satin of bow tie fabric slinking around his wrists. The thrill that coursed through him was indescribable, and he stayed as still as he could. For now.

When his wrists were tied, he could feel Will’s hands on him again, cascading over his hips gracefully, and down his thighs. Just when Hannibal began to delight in the delicate touch, Will’s fangs pierced through his hip, making him cry out again.

He remained there, his entire lower half shaking as he felt Will’s teeth puncture through him over and over again, the tears that were in his eyes now pouring out and mixing with the blood as he let out his helpless moans.

And finally, with a final, gentle kiss on his hip, Will was done. He carefully undid the knot around Hannibal’s wrists, giving them a brief rub to check and make sure that they weren’t hurt in any way. He backed up a bit, giving Hannibal enough space to get up.

Hannibal lay there for a few moments longer, bringing his hands to the floor, breathing deeply, processing everything about how he felt. His body ached, and yet he couldn’t process it as true pain, much less when he felt Will’s hand on his back, gently rubbing soothing circles where there were previously bite marks.

Finally, he pushed himself up until he was sitting, leaning on one hip, his bites now healed. He sat silently for a minute, still coming back from it all, with Will rubbing one of his shoulders and allowing him to take his time.

Hannibal finally looked down, processing that his floor had blood on it. His blood. He brought a hand to his face, wiping the cheek that had been pressed against the floor, pulling back to see his own blood staining his fingers. He turned around at last.

Will was sitting back on his heels, gazing at him with pure fondness, his mouth completely covered in Hannibal's blood.

Will brought a hand up, gently cupping Hannibal's cheek, wiping away tears that remained. "Hey…You okay?"

With about as much grace as a newborn deer, Hannibal grabbed the sides of Will's face, pulling him into a kiss.

Will made a little surprised noise, but soon after wrapped his arms around Hannibal, pulling him closer and closing his eyes.

Hannibal kept a hand on the side of Will's face, slinking the other around to cup the back of his neck, his fingertips caressing the hair at the base of his skull.

He tasted the coppery stickiness from Will's mouth, knowing that it was his own blood. Aside from the feeling of Will's mouth on his own, it was all he could think of. Treasuring part of himself together. Tasting what Will tastes. Taking Will's perspective. When tears ran down his face again, Will knew what they meant without having to ask.

When Will finally pulled away, all Hannibal could do was gaze at him helplessly.

Will laughed softly. "We gotta get you cleaned up."

Hannibal wrapped his arms around Will's shoulders, giving him pleading eyes. "Will…"

"Hey, we have plenty of time for anything you want. I'm not going anywhere, alright? I'm right here. Let me take care of you."

Hannibal stared, slightly overwhelmed. It was far greater of a gesture to offer to take care of him than he was sure Will knew. He pulled back, just enough to bring a hand to caress Will's cheek.

"In the morning…will I lose this?"

Will just smiled, pressing his hand onto the back of Hannibal's.

"You're not getting rid of me that easily. I told you, I'm not going anywhere."

"You've left before."

"You didn't kiss me before."

Hannibal sighed, the gravity of that decision weighing in. He glanced at the stairs.

"Long way up," Will joked. "Sure you can make it?"

"We are about to find out."

Of course, in his blood-depleted state, Will did not allow that to happen. He scooped him up, carrying him up to the main bedroom and its adjacent bathroom. After a quick tutorial on

how to operate the bath, Will knelt beside it, diligently scrubbing away the remnants of the mess he made.

Hannibal fell asleep to the feeling of Will’s hands through his hair.

Chapter End Notes

i couldn't figure out how to end it properly, so i hope it doesn't sound too abrupt.

thank you for reading! :]

Who Is Your Renfield?

Chapter Summary

Hannibal discovers that, despite all of his devotion, he has some competition.

Chapter Notes

hello everyone! sorry that this took so long to get to, i know you've been waiting for it :]

PLEASE mind the new tags! the tags will update as needed

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"The date is April 23rd, 2013. I am creating this log, once again, in my office at the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. This recording may be brought home for the sake of preventing its discovery, because good God, I don't think I could take anyone finding this.

Last night…Oh, where do I even begin…I still can't figure out if I've somehow crafted the entire scene in my head. How is it possible for him to have found me? He lives almost remotely, everyone knows that. Our previous meeting did not exactly go according to plan… and I fear that I've found myself on the devil's to-do list.

The only person to even remotely know anything about this would be Dr. Bloom. I had asked her earlier if she might know if…um…God…if Will Graham might somehow be in contact with Dr. Lecter. Dr. Bloom appeared stressed, and thus I believe that my assumptions are correct.

If so, Dr. Lecter has found himself in imminent danger, likely without knowing it. Will Graham must have somehow convinced him of an allyship, who knows what that beast is capable of. Or perhaps, and this somehow worries me even more, Dr. Lecter knows full well of the danger he is in, and he knows not to cross the monster lest he end up between its fangs.

I am recording this for the sake of my own sanity, so that I do not forget what I saw, no matter how much I would like to. He– He lifted *me, for God's sake! I was nearly killed! But who would believe me? The FBI knows. I know that they know…Would they prevent me from leaking it? Someone like Freddie Lounds would listen, wouldn't she? They never do anything about* her *. But no one's heard from her. God, has he gotten to her, too?*

Far be it from me to declare myself going insane, I know what I saw. I know what he is. I know that others know what he is. My current and only goal, as of right now, is to keep myself alive. If nobody is hunting that beast…so be it. If I stay out of his way, he won't come for me. We know that much, at least.

God…A vampire. A goddamn vampire…"

___

Light cascaded through the curtains when his eyes opened at last.

Despite the events of the previous night, he wasn't sure that his body had ever felt more relaxed. He would have to find out eventually if this was his lover's doing, or if it was merely a natural consequence.

His *lover* . That was true now, wasn't it?

He couldn't help the smile that broke out over his face, remembering the vow that was made.

"In the morning, will I lose this?"

"You're not getting rid of me that easily. I told you, I'm not going anywhere."

“You’ve left before.”

“You didn’t kiss me before.”

Despite the situation they were in, Hannibal wasn’t sure that another being on this earth had ever treated him with as much tenderness as Will had the evening prior. After Will had so diligently bathed the blood off of him, the rest of the night was a blur. Tugging the covers aside, it would seem that Will had gotten him his usual pajama bottoms in the end.

Instantly, and with the utmost delight, Hannibal imagined if he hadn’t at all.

Will knew very well by then how Hannibal preferred to be handled. Of course, every time Will has fed on him, there was always some sort of forewarning at the very least. Plenty of opportunity for Hannibal to refuse, though they both knew damn well that he could never so much as *imagine* refusing.

His mind glittered with images of an idealized version of the night before, and what could have been. He knew that Will would *never* , but oh, the thought…

Conscious enough to feel, but not enough to fight. Not that he would fight regardless, of course. Will towering over him as he lay shivering in bed, reaching out to the cold undead to somehow warm him. His mumbled pleas being met with fangs between his thighs, biting dangerously close to his–

He groaned, shuffling slightly in his bed. He reached down to tug his pajama bottoms away, looking down to see that he was already beginning to fill out.

The things Will did to him, even without knowing.

But if he *did* know?

Oh, if only he knew what Hannibal would allow him to do. If Hannibal were to lay awake at night, only to just barely hear his window open. To not have time to react before he's thrust back to his own bed with the strength of ten men, to be reduced to nothing but a writhing mass of flesh for Will to have his way with.

He gripped himself beneath the covers, his breath already beginning to quicken. He could feel the way he was already beginning to drip, clear fluid leaking from his tip and already coating his hand. It dawned on him then that he may even be able to finish from his filthy daydreams alone.

He imagined those teeth on his neck, on his chest, anywhere they could reach. He imagined his wrists being gripped hard enough to break bone, pinned to the head of his bed. He wondered if Will, having no coursing blood of his own, had the ability to grow erect anymore. He wondered if *his* blood coursing through Will's withered veins would do the trick, being brutally fucked by the force of his own desire to feed the beast.

It didn't take him very many strokes before his back arched and he was spilling onto his own hand.

Even coming down from his high, his mind was filled with almost nothing but his dear Will. The mess that the man (no, he was no mere man) reduced him to, the humble (no, far from it) servant he would be for him.

Will had given him such an extraordinary gift. It was about time he began to return the favor *properly* .

———

As far as tableaus went, time was something that always needed to be considered. The rate of decay of the flesh that was being turned into art, the timing of displaying it, when it would be discovered, everything.

As with any art, the audience must be considered.

As of right now, the audience is but one, sole person.

Will would appreciate this, he knew that he would. As he heaved with cracking knees to shove the body down onto the stag head, he knew that Will would know his intentions exactly.

The beast would see him at last.

———

The gravel crunched beneath his shoes as he approached the scene. Years of experience did nothing to lessen his cringing expression as he approached the tableau, the grisly scene horrifically familiar.

The body was that of a young woman, mounted on a stag head, her torso torn open and her organs either missing or strewn about. Her expression was frozen, stress lines evident on her face. She died afraid.

In front of the body, two 1-gallon jugs, filled with most of the woman's blood.

Alana wasn't far behind Jack, having been called in entirely because of the familiarity of the scene. There weren't many people who would know what the tableau meant.

One in particular absolutely would.

Jack turned, gazing into the large bushes beside the scene. Even in the shadows, he knew who was lurking there. The same man who found the display, who panicked and called it in, who

knew of its implications, and who was currently curled up out of sight, his hand over his mouth, staring wide-eyed directly at the jugs of blood.

Jack took a breath.

“Will,” he began, “it’s just us three right now. I sent all the others away. You don’t have to hide in there.”

Silence. Alana cast him a worried look. Jack waved her off.

“You and I both know this was left for you, Will,” Jack continued. “I know you wanna find out who did this, and I know you wanna stop them.” A slight pause, enough for him to finally see Will’s eyes through the brush. “But we also know what you are. And we know what happens when you try to hold yourself off, Will. You know that you can’t. I know that you can’t. We can’t fault you for what you got turned into, Will. It’s better to take what you’ve been given than to risk hurting anyone else, we all know you don’t wanna do that.”

Will gazed up at him, eyes wide and full of anxiety. He glanced nervously between Jack and the scene, his hand just barely coming off of his mouth to reveal a tongue gliding over fangs. Jack sighed.

“Will. Get out here and drink.”

There weren't very many times that Jack got to see that flash in Will’s eyes, but it never failed to send a shudder down even his spine. Will rose at last, stepping out of the bushes, avoiding the gaze of the two people whose gazes never left him.

His movements were shaky as he came out, the gravel crunching beneath his shoes as it did beneath Jack’s. A reminder of their sameness in some capacities. A reminder that he still had a form, one that very much looked human. One that very much used to be.

Unable to control himself as he got closer, he grabbed one of the jugs, twisting the plastic cap off, and he drank.

He downed about half of the container before he pulled it away, blood trickling down his mouth and down his chin, beginning to drip onto his shirt. His brows creased as he looked down at the half-finished jug in his hands. His expression was unmistakably that of shame.

“Will,” Jack said, his voice shockingly gentle at a time like this, “do you know who did this?”

Will shook his head.

“No,” he said, swallowing around the thick blood in his throat. “It…They tried to emulate two killers at once, and they failed completely.”

“The Shrike and the Ripper,” Jack supplied.

Will nodded.

“What the hell does the Ripper have to do with you?” Jack asked, staring at him intently.

Will knew he had to tread carefully.

“Whoever did this, they specifically emulated cannibals. They wanted to emulate people that…that consumed people. You already know why they chose the Shrike. The Ripper is just…nearby.”

Jack nodded, seemingly satisfied with that answer. It made enough of a degree of sense for now.

Will set the jug down, as though disgusted with it. God, he wished the Ripper was nearby after all. The only time he didn't feel completely horrified with himself and what he had to consume was with someone who shared his taste, who helped him indulge in it.

Who thought he was beautiful because of it.

"Will?"

Will looked up, startled out of his thoughts. He met Alana's gaze, and for once, she didn't look horrified to see him.

She looked concerned.

"Take it easy, alright?" she said. "We know you'll be able to find who did this. Just promise me it won't get into your head too much."

He blinked, struggling to comprehend her sudden turn towards him. Why would she suddenly be concerned about if he–

…He sighed.

"You talked to Hannibal, didn't you?"

"Will," she tried again, stepping closer to him, ignoring how he instinctively stepped back a bit. "You promised us something very particular about the kinds of people you'll hunt. This is one of them. I should have listened to you from the beginning, I really wish I did."

He looked towards the ground, away from her, swallowing.

“You needed someone else’s opinion to get you here,” he said, his voice low.

“Will–”

“I need to go,” he said, turning to leave.

“Will!”

He sighed, turning back to her. “What?”

She hesitated, but finally, she gestured towards the jugs.

“Take them. It’ll keep you fed without needing to…without needing to hunt anyone. You and I both know you’ll feel better about it.”

He glanced down at the jugs, considering for a moment.

At last, grimacing, he lifted the containers and left.

———

Despite the door being open, Will’s dogs milling about on his front lawn, Hannibal knocked on the doorframe anyway.

He had come with a soft smile on his face, holding a container of food he’d spent the afternoon preparing for Will. Fresh human meat, taken from his latest kill that he’d yet to display. The tableau would be displayed by the next day, but if not, should this evening go

especially well, the body was currently being preserved in his basement, and thus he did not have to worry about the flesh decomposing too much for him to use.

His smile dropped when he saw Will, sitting on the side of his bed, a full jug of blood in front of him.

Will lifted his brows slightly, an exasperated acknowledgment of the questioning look Hannibal was giving him. He rubbed his face, sitting upright.

“A gift, apparently,” Will said, gesturing to the container of blood. “There were two left at the scene.”

As far as thermal burns went, Hannibal wasn’t sure whether his blood was boiling or running cold.

“Someone has hunted for you, then?” he asked, forcing his voice to remain steady.

“I don’t know who, and I don’t know why,” Will said, standing to begin pacing around the room. “I don’t know who knows about me enough to do something like this. He was…He tried to replicate the Shrike.” Will turned to him, disappointment in his eyes. “And he tried to replicate you. It didn’t work so well.”

Hannibal imagined that this was what a wild animal felt as it was tamed. He calmed enough to no longer have thoughts of somebody else being somehow deemed more *adequate* of a hunter than him, with this other man’s killings apparently being pathetic in comparison to his own.

Will’s brow furrowed as he looked at the container in Hannibal’s hands. “What’s that?”

Ah . Hannibal glanced at the container he held, disappointment coursing through him. He wondered if Will would be able to taste the emotion in his blood.

“I’d brought you lunch,” he said, “though it seems you’ve been sustained for the day.”

Will groaned then, pressing his palms to his eyes in stress. “Fuck…I’m sorry, I just…It was easier than having to hunt. I didn’t know you’d be coming by today, and these were…well, they were already there. It was either drink or let it rot.”

Hannibal’s posture somehow straightened further, coldness returning to his being. Despite all he knew about Will, about how they were together, he couldn’t help what came to mind. Ease over devotion. Rotting blood over fresh meat. He understood exactly why Will would take what was given to him, and yet the insult ran deep, coating his veins until he was sure that Will would taste his hurt for months to come.

He returned to reality as Will approached.

“I’m glad to see you fed either way,” Hannibal tried to deflect.

Will wasn’t having any of it. He reached up, cupping both sides of Hannibal’s face in his hands, feeling the almost involuntary way the man relaxed into his hold.

“Hey,” Will said. “I appreciate everything you do for me. You know I do, right?”

Hannibal’s sigh was nearly imperceptible. Or it would have been, to anyone that was not Will.

“I do,” and it felt like a vow.

Will smiled at him then, clearly happy with that response. “Good. Just because I can’t go for you or your food all the time doesn’t mean I don’t prefer it.”

And, of course, there it was, Will knowing all the right itches to scratch to ease the beast before him.

Hannibal took a breath, attempting to steady himself. “You prefer mine?”

“Of course I do,” Will said, grinning. “You know how to make it taste the best.”

Hannibal was no longer sure if Will was referring to the hunts, or to Hannibal’s own blood. Heat rose to his face nonetheless, spreading beneath his collar until he was sure Will felt that he was warm to the touch.

“You can have it,” Hannibal found himself saying. “Any time you want. You know that you can.”

Will huffed softly, slightly amused. “Yeah, I’m sure you’d let me. But you need time for that blood to replenish. I know you know that.”

“Even so,” Hannibal argued, suddenly invigorated. “You have my blanket permission, as it were. There is nothing you could do to me that I would not comply with.”

Will pulled back slightly, brows furrowed in confusion. “That’s…a little intense, but I appreciate the sentiment. You know I’ll still always ask if–”

“You do not need to,” Hannibal said, uncharacteristically interrupting. “Anything of mine is yours, Will.”

Will’s confusion did not dissipate. He stared quizzically at Hannibal, expecting some sort of explanation.

“Hannibal…if this is about someone else trying to hunt for me…”

“I assure you, it is not,” Hannibal replied. “I knew of the sort of power you could hold over me from the moment we met, and I knew that I would never mind it. You are beyond fascinating, Will, you *enrapture* me. I can only hope to one day experience all of you, including your force.”

Will blinked, surprised. “Wh–...You want me to *hunt* you?”

“In a manner of speaking, yes.”

Will’s confusion lasted about five more seconds, before his eyes went wide, and the blood he’d consumed visibly rushed to his face.

Anger replaced the shock.

“Hannibal– Holy shit, what the *fuck* , Hannibal?” he stammered, stepping back. “You think that I would…That I’d–”

“Not on your own,” Hannibal quickly clarified. “Not as an abuse of power. I assure you that was never what I had in mind.”

Will released a breath that he somehow had, his hands scrubbing over his face. “Good God, Hannibal…Lead with that next time, would you?”

“I apologize, I did not mean to give you any discomfort. I did not think it would be so delicate of a subject.”

Will rolled his eyes then, glaring at him. “What, because I’m no longer fully *human* ? I must enjoy taking advantage of someone like that? That’s what monsters do, right?”

Concern flashed in Hannibal's eyes, and for once, some semblance of remorse. "Will, that is not at *all* what I was implying."

"You might as well have," Will spat. "You wouldn't be the first. *Everyone* thinks that of me. I shouldn't be shocked that you–"

" *Will* ," Hannibal said as his hands came to Will's shoulders, his voice just slightly raised, cutting Will off. "That was not *ever* what I meant. My devotion to you has rewired every neuron in my brain, every base instinct that I have ever had is now attuned to you. I do not see you as some monstrous thing that takes advantage of the innocent. I want your force because I crave it, not because I find it inherently in your nature. Your nature allows for it, but it does not guarantee it. I was not asking you to be a monster, I was asking if you would indulge me."

Will's shoulders slumped in Hannibal's grasp, one of his hands finally coming to cover one of Hannibal's. He took some moments to relax, nodding at last.

"No, you're…You're right. Everything you said was more about you than about me, I'm sorry, I just– I've been more surrounded by talk about me lately than I have been in a long time. I can't tell who acknowledges me for who I am and who thinks I'm just some demon of the night or some shit. I'm not a good person, I know that, but I'm not *evil* . I don't know who acknowledges that anymore…"

Hannibal's grip on him loosened, only just enough to wrap his arms around him instead, pulling him close. Will went willingly, resting his head on Hannibal's shoulder.

"I'll have to repeat your question then," Hannibal said lightheartedly. "Is this about the fact that somebody else is hunting for you?"

Will sighed. "...Yeah. It is. Things like this don't usually fuck me up this bad, but I don't know, I've never had this happen."

Hannibal thought for a moment, pondering the situation as his fingers raked through Will's curls. Perhaps he was taking advantage of Will's newfound relaxation, but he needed to

know.

“What will you do with him once you find him?”

Will shook his head, clinging onto Hannibal’s jacket as though grounding himself. “I don’t know,” he said quietly. “I just hope he fucks off.”

Hannibal laughed softly, pressing him closer. “Perhaps you can make that happen.”

Will hummed. “Or maybe you can. I know you would, you jealous thing.”

“Am I meant to feign offense for humor’s sake?”

“You can if you want. Not sure I’m much for humor right now.”

Hannibal nodded. “You wouldn’t by chance be hungry, would you?”

Will smiled slightly into his shoulder. “You know? I had plenty to drink, but I think I could use something to *eat* . What did you bring?”

“Not what,” Hannibal corrected, lightheartedly scolding. “ *Whom* .”

Chapter End Notes

Hannibal Lecter and the mortifying ordeal of discovering that your boyfriend is more vanilla than you thought

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